

Beat: News

Elderly U.S. man found guilty of 1980s serial murders in Los Angeles

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USPA News - An elderly man who was arrested in Kentucky two years ago was convicted Tuesday of murdering three women in downtown Los Angeles more than two decades ago, though investigators believe he may be responsible for many more murders, prosecutors said. A jury in Los Angeles deliberated for just two hours before finding Samuel Little, 74, guilty of the first-degree murders of three women whose bodies were dumped in alleyways near downtown Los Angeles in the 1980s.

The victims were identified as 41-year-old Carol Alford, who was killed in July 1987, 35-year-old Audrey Nelson, who was killed in August 1989, and 46-year-old Guadalupe Apodaca, who was killed in September 1989. Detectives from the Los Angeles Police Department's Cold Case Homicide Unit began their investigation into Little in 2012 after California's DNA Combined Internet Index System (CODIS) offender databank linked him to DNA which was recovered in relation to the murders of Nelson and Apodaca. Little, who is also known as Samuel McDowell, was taken into custody at his home in Louisville, Kentucky, on September 5, 2012, on an unrelated Los Angeles narcotics warrant from 2009. Little subsequently waived extradition and was returned to Los Angeles in October 2012 while detectives continued building their case. In November 2012, Little was connected to a Alford's murder, again through DNA evidence. A grand jury indicted Little in April 2013 for the three murders with the special circumstance of multiple murders, though prosecutors chose not to seek the death penalty, which would unlikely have been carried out due to Little's old age, even if California were to resume carrying out the death penalty. Deputy District Attorney Beth Silverman said all three victims led troubled lives, with both drugs and prostitution making them vulnerable and easy targets for Little. The three victims were all strangled to death with their bodies found naked from the waist down, indicating they were raped. Cold case detectives are continuing to work with other law enforcement agencies throughout the United States in areas where Little has been known to frequent, and investigators believe he may be responsible for dozens of murders throughout the years. Detectives are also reviewing other Los Angeles-area homicides for a possible connection to Little. Little will be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole on September 25. Los Angeles detectives have been able to solve a number of cold cases in recent years, often through DNA evidence. Former pizza delivery man Chester Turner, who had already been convicted of killing 10 women and an unborn child in Los Angeles over an 11-year-old period starting in 1987, was sentenced to death for a second time last month after being found guilty of four more murders during the same period.

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