

Seaside toddler murder trial begins

Roden's death penalty trial could last up to two months

By Kyle Spurr
EO Media Group

Clatsop County's first death penalty trial in 15 years started this month in Circuit Court.

Randy Lee Roden, 28, is on trial for allegedly murdering his girlfriend's 2-year-old daughter and abusing her two sons while they all lived together in a Seaside apartment. The gruesome scene discovered in December 2014 is described as among the worst child-abuse cases in the county.

The trial, in courtroom 300, which opened Sept. 20, continues to focus on jury selection. Prospective jurors are being screened in the courtroom in groups of six until the 12-person jury is selected, with two to four alternates. The pool of available jurors will be asked about their attitudes toward capital punishment and whether they think they can be impartial.

Judge Paula Brownhill decided to have the jurors questioned in groups, rather than individually, after her experience presiding over the coun-



Defense lawyer Conor Huseby, right, speaks with Randy Roden during a hearing at the Clatsop County Courthouse.

ty's last death penalty case.

In 2001, Anthony Scott Garner was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison for fatally stabbing a woman on a motorboat in the Warrenton mooring basin and setting the boat on fire to cover up the crime.

"We questioned jurors individually in 15-minute segments, and it took over a week to select 12 jurors," Brownhill said. "In the Roden case, we will bring jurors into the courtroom in groups of six rather than one at a time."

Evidence

The District Attorney's Office believes it has enough physical evidence and expert opinion to connect the

crimes to Roden. The state will present evidence showing the 2-year-old, Evangelina Wing, and her brothers were tortured, burned, bitten and caged in the Seaside apartment their mother, Dorothy Wing, shared with Roden.

Evangelina Wing apparently died of battered child syndrome with blunt force trauma to her head. Blood spatter was found in almost every corner of the apartment, staining holiday decorations and the wall behind a Christmas tree.

Roden's defense is that he did not commit the crimes. His lawyer, Conor Huseby, is adamant that someone else is to blame, possibly the children's mother.



Evangelina Wing in an undated photo. The 2-year-old died Dec. 20, 2014.

Dorothy Wing, 26, pleaded guilty in January to first-degree manslaughter and two counts of first-degree criminal mistreatment. She was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison, contingent on her truthfully testifying at Roden's trial.

"Mr. Roden's defense will be what it has always been; he simply did not commit the crimes the state has accused him of," Huseby wrote in a court document.

Witnesses

Roden's trial could last up to two months. Trial days will be Tuesday through Friday, with occasional time off of those days if a session finishes early or the court has an emergency hearing in another case.

Multiple witnesses for the prosecution and defense will testify. Many are traveling from Georgia, where Roden grew up.

Witnesses for Roden include his close friends, sister, half brother and sixth- and

third-grade teachers. The defense also plans to call Janice Ophoven, a pediatric forensic pathologist, who claims the toddler likely died from complications of a flesh-eating infection, rather than from blunt-force trauma.

The prosecution will call two of Roden's ex-girlfriends, who can detail a pattern of violence against women and children.

One ex-girlfriend, who dated Roden from March to July 2014, will say he did not like children, he abused her children both physically and emotionally and her children were fearful of him. She will testify that Roden was very controlling with her and the children, threatened to move out and warned he would commit suicide in order to control her behavior, according to court documents.

Roden is serving an eight-year prison sentence for violating probation from a domestic violence conviction in 2013 involving his other ex-girlfriend. The woman is traveling from Tennessee to testify against Roden.

"(She) is a past girlfriend and prior crime victim of Mr. Roden and has abundant information about his character," Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown wrote in a court document.

Gearhart police report August 2016

For the month of August 2016 in the Gearhart Police Department's report to the City Council, there were no reported burglaries, auto thefts, acts of vandalism, trespass, or violation of liquor or weapon laws. There were no reported assaults, sex offenses, harassments, menacing, or runaways. There were three traffic accidents and two reports of vehicular hit and runs. Twenty disturbances were reported and cleared, as well as four incidents involving animals. The police conducted 309 security checks and rendered assistance 63 times. There were two reported thefts in the 2nd degree. Among the three traffic accidents, one human injury was reported and two reports of property damage. Two adults were taken into custody arrest. Fifty-six traffic and city violators were issued warnings. No deaths in the city of Gearhart were reported.

SEASIDE POLICE LOG

Sept. 11 8:40 a.m., 500 block Broadway: A missing person was reported.

3:23 p.m., Broadway and Edgewood: An officer attempted to maneuver back into position a moved sewer grate that appeared to have been moved by someone attempting to retrieve a lost object. The grate became wedged and is deemed a tripping hazard. Public works was notified.

9:49 p.m., 200 block S. Roosevelt: Caller reports a domestic situation in progress; the com-

plainant left the scene before police arrived.

10:07 a.m., 2000 block North Fork: Complainant reports a person or persons in a red BMW parking near his home late at night and depositing their "fruits of love" on the street. Police advise they will send extra patrols to the area.

7:15 p.m., Seaside Police Station: A person came in to register as a sex offender.

Sept. 13 12:45 a.m., 1100 block Broad-

way: A Burglary II incident was reported. No further information was available.

12:50 a.m., 200 block S. Holladay: Police receive information about a subject asleep in a damaged vehicle, parts of the vehicle being held together with tape. Subject told police it was old damage, but was advised they would be contacted should a hit and run match be located.

3:13 p.m., Avenue S and storage area: Police are asked to assist with traffic control at a

power pole fire.

5:10 p.m., 1600 block S. Columbia: A civil dispute among family members regarding the dispersal of belongings of a deceased family member resulted in police intervention. The parties involved were offered options how to solve their problem.

Sept. 14 1:05 a.m., 12th and Necanicum: Police respond to a report of a man screaming. Police are unable to locate anyone screaming.

2:27 p.m., Highway 101: Police arrive on scene to assist Gearhart police and Medix at the scene of a traffic stop.

6:40 p.m., 800 block S. Roosevelt: Police respond to a report of a woman described as being "very upset." She told police she was trying to retrieve a lost item.

Sept. 15 11:37 a.m., 1500 block N. Roosevelt: Police respond to a complaint about a vehicle that possibly stole mail from the Seaside Signal newspaper office.

An officer was in the area at the time of the call, but was unable to locate the described vehicle.

9:51 p.m., 200 block Broadway: Caller reports to police a man who has threatened to fight him and who has been calling him derogatory names. Officer is unable to locate subject.

Sept. 17 4:35 p.m., 300 block N. Columbia: Caller reports seeing a woman in a dress who seemed like she could use assistance. Police locate subject and give her a courtesy ride to her hotel.



The Providence Hood & Portland To Coast Relays, would like to thank the wonderful community of Seaside and Clatsop County residents for partnering with us on the largest relay race in the world! You are all truly amazing people!

HERE'S A RECAP OF THE EVENT YOU SO GRACIOUSLY HOST

- Thank you so much Seaside Chamber of Commerce for creating one heck of a beer garden!
- More than \$600,000 was fundraised, which benefits Providence Cancer Center and their continuous efforts to find a cure for cancer.
- Thanks to the Clatsop County cleanup crew for helping make the roads as clean as they were before the race.
- \$18,000 was again donated to Seaside Parks and Recreation.
- Thank you Seaside, for supporting the race for 27 years in your community!
- Special thanks to all the amazing charities on course; runners and walkers loved everything you provided, and we hope you continue to fund money for your charities in future years.
- As we cannot reach every individual who participated in making this event a success, we want to say THANK YOU SEASIDE, YOU ARE THE BEST!

With more than 60,000 individuals visiting Seaside for The Hood and Portland To Coast Relays, (many for the first time), this visit represents a first impression to a captive audience that very often leads to future visits for these individuals and their families. This is an economic impact that goes beyond measure and one that can very often be a lifelong development of future memories in your town. Looking forward to seeing you all in 2017!

hoodto coast.com

