

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 76/00 (AMR 51/151/00, 3 October 2000) and follow-up (AMR 51/153/00, 11 October 2000) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Alabama) Jeffrey Franklin, aged 19

Jeffrey Franklin's case has been settled by plea agreement. On 27 June, he pleaded guilty to two counts of non-capital murder and three counts of attempted murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. Under current rules he will be eligible for parole in 30 to 45 years.

Jeffrey Franklin was charged with murdering his parents, Gerald and Cynthia Franklin, and with attempting to murder three of his siblings. At a trial last year, the Madison County District Attorney's Office had intended to seek the death penalty. Jeffrey Franklin was 17 years old when his family was attacked on 10 March 1998. International law forbids the use of the death penalty against those who were under 18 at the time of the crime.

In the event, a mistrial was declared on grounds of juror misconduct. About two weeks before the trial was due to reconvene last month, the prosecution dropped its intention to seek the death penalty, and the plea agreement was reached shortly after that.

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Jeffrey Franklin's lawyers have asked for their thanks to be passed on to all who sent appeals last October (which apparently broke the prosecutor's fax machine at one point). The lawyers believe that the international attention contributed to the prosecution's decision to drop their pursuit of the death penalty.