

Kater guilty of kidnapping and murder

Faces mandatory life sentence

By KAREN CUBIE
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CAMBRIDGE — "They're taking my life because of a green car!" James M. Kater cried out yesterday evening as a Middlesex Superior Court jury found him guilty of the 1978 kidnapping and murder of Raynham teenager Mary Lou Arruda.

"Don't take my life! Don't take my life!" he sobbed repeatedly as he sank back into his chair.

"He did what I wanted, he begged for his life," Joanne Arruda, Mary Lou's mother, told the press after court. "My life's gone!" he said. No! Her life's gone! We'll never even up the score.

"I hope he's depressed enough tonight to commit suicide!"

The 15-man jury gripped hands as they announced yesterday's decision at 5:30 p.m. ending ended 42 hours of deliberations over eight days. It was an agonizingly long wait for both Kater and Mary Lou's family.

Kater, who had remained calm through most of the trial, appeared nervous when he entered the courtroom. He sat in front of the Judge Robert S. Prince and rested his head in his hands while he awaited the verdict.

Mrs. Arruda sat on the first bench directly behind Kater. She sobbed silently and repeatedly threw hate-filled grimaces at Kater's back while her husband, Adrian, and son, Antone, comforted and held her.



JAMES M. KATER
Shaken by verdict

Yesterday was the second time a jury has found Kater, 39, a former Brockton doughnut shop manager, guilty of kidnapping and murdering 15-year-old Mary Lou Arruda. She was last seen alive riding her bicycle on Dean Street near her Raynham home on Sept. 8, 1978.

Her body was found tied to a tree in Freetown State Forest nine weeks later on Nov. 11.

A Bristol County Superior Court jury originally convicted Kater of the crimes in 1979. The verdict

was reversed in 1983 by a state Supreme Judicial Court because the testimonies of hypnotized witnesses had been improperly admitted at trial.

The jury convicted him without knowledge of the previous conviction or that he had pleaded guilty in 1968 to the attempted murder and kidnapping of a 13-year-old Boxford girl. That victim escaped and later identified Kater.

In 1965, he was also convicted of kidnapping and assaulting a New Hampshire woman.

Kater was released from prison in 1975 after serving seven years of a 15-20-year Walpole state prison term for the 1968 crime. He was believed to be no longer sexually dangerous.

He was on parole when he committed both the 1968 and the 1978 crimes.

Yesterday, Judge Prince sentenced Kater to a mandatory life sentence without parole for the murder. The sentencing for the kidnapping conviction was held at 10 a.m. today.

"You made a verdict, and I accept it," Prince told the emotionally worn-out jurors after Kater was escorted from the courtroom. "Now I wish to speak to you concerning matters that will follow. It would be a good practice when your service is concluded to refrain from discussion with anyone about your service."

"Do not subject yourself to interrogation or interviews by counsel or parties, or by the news media, if they seek interviews."

He stressed no laws forbade them to discuss the case.

"But it is the (feeling) of the court it would be a better practice not to because jurors should not be subjected to harrassment. It would tend to erode the jury system."

Bristol County Assistant District Attorney Lance Garth, who prosecuted the case, was relieved by the jury's verdict.

"It's been seven years," he said. "The jury has spoken as other juries have before. The verdict is just."

Bellotti won't run for a fourth term

BOSTON (UPI) — Attorney General Francis X. Bellotti, one of the most popular public officials in Massachusetts history, announced today he will not run for a fourth term, bringing to an end a political career that spanned more than two decades.

"There is a time to begin and a time to

as a potential gubernatorial candidate.

With Bellotti's future still undecided, his likely Democratic successors — like Middlesex County District Attorney Scott Harshbarger, Essex County District Attorney Kevin Burke, Bristol County District Attorney Ronald A. Pina and former U.S. Rep. James M. Shannon — have



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