

FLAGLER DOUBLE MURDER

## Convicted killer's sentencing delayed

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DAYTONA BEACH — The penalty phase of William Gregory's double-murder trial continues today after a delay caused by Gregory's apparent reaction to an anti-psychotic drug given to him after he flooded his cell and caused other problems in jail.

Gregory, 28, was convicted Thursday of two counts of first-degree murder for the shotgun slayings of his ex-girlfriend Skyler Meekins, 17, and her boyfriend,

Daniel Dyer, 22, as the couple slept on Aug. 21, 2007, near Flagler Beach. Meekins and Gregory had a daughter, Kyla, now 4. The jury is expected to consider today whether to recommend that Gregory be put to death or spend the rest of his life in prison.

The jury was to have begun the process on Tuesday morning, but no sooner had the 15 jurors taken their seats than Circuit Judge William A. Parsons apologized for inconveniencing them and sent them home. A short time later, deputies returned Gregory to the Flagler County jail where a doctor would evaluate him. He was expected back in court today.

Gregory told the judge that he had been given Haldol and previously when he received it, his jaw had locked up.

"The reaction the last time . . . when I had the shot, the next day, the full next day, I was locked up," Gregory said.

Defense attorney Garry Wood said he could hear popping sounds when talking to Gregory. The sounds could also be heard at times in the courtroom.

"When I was talking to him there's a loud popping sound every time he's trying to talk," Wood said. At one point, the attorney snapped his fingers several times to demonstrate the noise.

Prosecutor Mark Johnson checked with jail officials who confirmed that Gregory had been given Haldol, an anti-psychotic medication, about 5 p.m. Monday after being disruptive. Gregory was also given Benadryl to counteract muscle stiffness caused by the Haldol.

Johnson said he was also told Tuesday morning that Gregory had received Haldol in the past and "it should have worn off by now."

Prosecutor Jacquelyn Roys worried about further delays.

"The medication was given to him as a result of his behavior," Roys said.

“If we delay this till tomorrow, my concern is that he’s going to go back and attempt to further delay this by his own antics.”

The jail problems with Gregory began over the weekend when he was verbally disruptive, according to Debra Johnson, a spokeswoman with the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office. His behavior Monday was worse. About 10:40 a.m., Gregory used a foam cup to plug his toilet and then repeatedly flushed, flooding the cell, the spokeswoman wrote in an e-mail.

About 2 p.m., Gregory “stood on the sink in his cell claiming to have a shank,” or makeshift knife, the spokeswoman wrote. Gregory was moved while deputies searched his cell. The “shank” ended up being “a plastic spoon wrapped in toilet paper,” she wrote.

About 2:30 p.m., Gregory tampered with a fire sprinkler in his new cell, setting off the sprinkler and fire alarm, the spokeswoman wrote. Deputies shut down the system and moved Gregory to another cell.

Haldol is used to treat disorders such as schizophrenia, as well as prevent suicide and reduce aggression and negative thinking and hallucinations, according to WebMD. Benadryl is an antihistamine used to treat allergies but is also used to treat side effects, including muscle stiffness, from some psychiatric drugs, according to WebMD.

The delay frustrated the families of the couple slain by Gregory.

Dyer’s sister, Jennifer Dyer-Auriemma, was red-faced and teary-eyed after the delay was announced.

“I’m just irritated and I’m tired of his boyish game,” she said. “He obviously wants just one more day out of jail.”

Meekins’ father, Charles “Hap” Meekins, said the family will wait a little longer.

“We are not surprised,” Meekins said. “It’s been delayed for 3 1/2 years, so another day is not going to change anything.”

“He’s trying to keep it going on, I think,” Meekins’ brother, Colton, said. “But I’ll just let the court do their job.”