

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	Case No. CR-11-0298-F
	)	
CONNELL C. WILLIAMS,	)	
	)	
Defendant.	)	

**STATEMENT TO THE JURY UPON TAKING THE  
GUILTY PLEA OF CONNELL C. WILLIAMS**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, this morning, under an agreement with the United States Government, the defendant, Connell C. Williams, entered a plea of guilty to first degree murder. This will result in the imposition of a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of release. As a result of the agreement between the government and the defendant, this trial has ended, as has your service as jurors.

Having starved a 10-year old boy to a slow death over a period of months in 2011, Connell Williams is no longer at risk for the death penalty. Because of your dedicated service as jurors in this heart-rending case, you deserve an explanation from the court as to how this matter has arrived at this point.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, I will emphasize that the decision to enter into an agreement with the defendant was a decision of the United States Department of Justice, which is responsible for the prosecution of federal crimes. The decision to withdraw the Notice of Intent to Seek the Death Penalty was a decision that was entirely the prerogative of the Justice Department, as part of the executive branch. The judicial branch, of which this court is a part, does not have the power to require

the Justice Department to proceed with a capital case if the Justice Department chooses not to do so, as the Justice Department has now done in this case.

The United States Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma has informed the court: (i) that he was required by Department of Justice policy to notify the Department of Justice in Washington of the defendant's expression of willingness to enter into a plea agreement providing for a life sentence, (ii) that after that information was provided to the Department of Justice, he was directed by the Department of Justice to withdraw the Notice of Intent to Seek the Death Penalty and to conclude the case on the basis of a life sentence, and (iii) that the decision to withdraw the notice required the personal approval of the Attorney General of the United States. It appears, on the basis of these representations, which the court has no reason to doubt, that the decisions which ended this case as a capital case were not made at the local level.

The decision by the Justice Department – with the personal approval of the Attorney General of the United States – to withdraw the Notice of Intent to Seek the Death Penalty, ended this case as a capital case and ensured that the punishment to be imposed on Mr. Williams will be a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of release.

Although your service to the court and the public has come to a premature end, you have served exceptionally well under trying circumstances. Please reflect on the fact that the fourteen of you, twelve and two alternates, were selected from the 171 prospective jurors who were, on February 4, found to be qualified under the law to serve as jurors in this term of court. You were sworn to serve as the jurors in this capital murder case only after an exacting selection process. Until this morning, the task that was entrusted to you was the task of adjudicating the guilt or innocence of the defendant and then, in the event of a finding of guilt, making a life and death

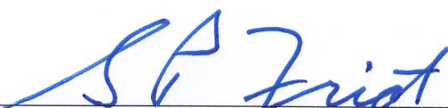
decision as to the consequences of the defendant's crime. Our Nation calls upon no one to make a more consequential decision than that. I am convinced that you, as the jurors selected after that arduous and exacting process, were and are worthy of the trust that was placed in you as the jury in this case.

Having had the opportunity to watch you closely during this trial, I can tell you without hesitation that I am absolutely convinced that you would have done justice by your verdict. In saying that, I do not presuppose what your verdict would have been. I am saying quite simply that, despite my personal view of the matter, which I am no longer obliged to conceal, I would have accepted your verdict, whatever it might have been, without hesitation. That is the beauty and genius of our system of trial by jury. For the same reasons that would cause me to trust your collective judgment more readily than I would trust the judgment of the Attorney General of the United States in this matter, I would trust your collective judgment more readily than I would trust my own judgment in this matter. However, in a decision with which I respectfully disagree, the Attorney General has chosen to end the process by which this matter would have been entrusted to you for your deliberations and verdict.

I am certain that no one person would have been better qualified than you, the jury in this case, to sit in judgment of Connell C. Williams and to determine the outcome of this case. In my view, in a case like this one, no decision by one person can command the moral force that your verdict would have commanded.

The court thanks you for your service.

Dated February 25, 2013.

  
STEPHEN P. FRIOT  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE