



0

U.S. Department of Justice

**Ronald C. Machen Jr.**  
*United States Attorney for the  
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center  
555 Fourth St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530*

---

## **PRESS RELEASE**

---

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, August 29, 2011

### **For Information Contact:**

**Public Affairs**

(202) 252-6933

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/news/2011/apr/news.html>

## **District Man Sentenced to More Than 74 Years in Prison For Crimes Surrounding 2008 Killing - Defendant Still Faces a Retrial on Murder Charges -**

WASHINGTON - Roderick A. Ridley, 34, of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to more than 74 years in prison for crimes surrounding the 2008 murder of a woman inside an apartment building in Southeast Washington, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Ridley was convicted by a jury on June 3, 2011 of a total of 26 felony counts, including one count each of first degree burglary and carrying a dangerous weapon, eight counts of obstruction of justice, seven counts of contempt, and nine counts of felony threats. He was sentenced this morning by the Honorable Gerald I. Fisher in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to a total of 74 years and four months in prison on those charges.

Following the earlier trial, and after six days of deliberations, the jury was unable to reach a verdict on felony murder, premeditated murder and another count of threats stemming from the killing of 33-year-old Tiffany Gates. Ridley is to be retried on those charges on May 7, 2012. If convicted at the retrial, Ridley faces the possibility of life imprisonment for those charges.

This brutal domestic violence case began in August of 2008, when the defendant was arrested for arson of Tiffany Gates's apartment, located in the 3900 block of D Street SE. Gates was the defendant's former girlfriend. Ridley was held without bond and was ordered by four judges to have no contact with Gates. Despite the Court's orders, Ridley called Gates more than 400 times, threatened to kill her, and demanded that she not cooperate with the prosecution in the arson case. Ridley made numerous phone calls in which he stated that he hated Gates, and that he would get out of jail and kill her. Eventually, though, he persuaded her to agree that he should be released to a halfway house. Then, on October 28, 2008, he escaped from a halfway house.

On November 21, 2008, Gates made calls to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and a member of the U.S. Marshals Service's Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force to notify them that Ridley was outside her apartment. Although police and the Marshals Service

immediately responded and were on the scene, they were unable to gain entry into the apartment building. The building had a metal door that opened outward, impeding the efforts to get inside.

According to the government's evidence, Ridley got into Gates's apartment building and kicked in her apartment door. He used a knife to brutally stab her. A neighbor heard a loud noise, heard Gates scream, and then saw the defendant flee the apartment. Moments later, Gates knocked on the neighbor's door and collapsed.

Seconds later, after a citizen opened the apartment building's door, police and the Marshals Service gained access to the inside of the structure.

Within an hour, Ridley was found hiding in a vacant apartment in the basement underneath a kitchen sink. Gates's blood was found on Ridley's sweatshirt, pants, and shoes. Ridley resisted arrest and it took four law enforcement officers to physically carry him from the building.

The jury convicted Ridley of first degree burglary for breaking in Gates's door on the night of the killing with intent to commit an assault, and of carrying a dangerous weapon - the knife. However, the jurors were unable to reach a conclusion as to the murder charges.

During the sentencing of the defendant, Judge Fisher called the case one of the most chilling he had ever seen during his time at the court.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of D.C. Arson Investigator James Taylor, U.S. Marshals Service Inspector Robert Hoffmaster, of the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force, and Tommy Miller, Durand Odom, John Marsh, Shannon Alexis and Larry Grasso, investigators for the U.S. Attorney's Office. He also praised those who worked on the case from the MPD, including Officers Thomas O'Donnell, Vincent Manning, David Jarbo, and Patrick Hogan; Forensic Lab Specialists Jennifer Zeffer, Lesley Kline, and Lisa Brewer; Mobile Crime Technicians Agee Kemper, Ridley Durham, Michael DePrince, Stanley Rembish, Tony G. Nwami, Perthoria McIver, and Valerie Campbell; Detectives Manuel Gaffney, Gail Russell-Brown, and Earl DeLauder, and Sergeants Daniel Wagner and Dean Combee. U.S. Attorney Machen also acknowledged the work of Metro Transit Police Detective Chris Archer and the FBI forensic investigator who assisted with the case.

U.S. Attorney Machen also commended the efforts of Litigation Technology Specialists Leif Hickling, Paul Howell, William Henderson, Kim Smith, and Ron Royal; Paralegal Specialists Wanda Queen, Phaylyn Hunt, Delissa Rivers, Alesha Matthews Yette, Fern Rhedrick, and Mark Silberstein; interns Justin DeBettencourt, Josh Calo, Melissa Chong, X. Kevin Liao, and Annabell Hallowell; Assistant U.S. Attorneys Holly Shick, Tom Spiggle, Ed Burley, Chrisellen R. Kolb, Mary McCord, Roy McLeese, Michelle Jackson, and Jeff Ragsdale, and Victim Witness Advocate Marcey Rinker.

Finally, U.S. Attorney Machen commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys Melinda Williams and Cynthia Wright, who prosecuted the case.

11-378

###