

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FROM: Catherine L. Hanaway  
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For Immediate Release

## **JEFFERSON COUNTY MAN & WOMAN INDICTED ON MURDER FOR HIRE CHARGES**

St. Louis, MO: Karen K. Coleman and James K. Kornhardt were indicted on murder for hire conspiracy charges in connection with the October 22, 1992, murder of Karen Coleman's husband, Danny Harold Coleman, United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway announced today.

"The defendants are alleged to have gone to great efforts, over a long period of time to conceal this murder. This indictment shows that law enforcement will not give up on the cause of justice," said Hanaway.

According to the indictment, in 1990, Karen Coleman recruited Larry Nolan to arrange the murder of her husband Danny H. Coleman so that she could collect on several insurance policies. Nolan recruited James Kornhardt, a firefighter with the Mehlville Fire Protection District to commit the murder. Karen Coleman agreed to pay Nolan and Kornhardt from the proceeds of the insurance policies. In October 1992, the indictment alleges that Karen Coleman mailed a letter to Larry Nolan explaining Danny Coleman's activities, movement, habits and other information so that Kornhardt would have knowledge and access to him. On October 22, 1992, Danny Coleman left work at approximately 4:00 p.m. The indictment states that he was later murdered by James Kornhardt. The cause of death was massive blunt force trauma to Danny Coleman's head and face. Danny Coleman's body and truck were found burnt in an isolated field located in Franklin County, MO.

Karen Coleman began collecting on insurance policies, including claims for loss on Danny Coleman's truck and claims for proceeds payable upon his death. The indictment states that among other things, in February 1993, Danny Coleman's employer paid her \$11,039; General American Life Insurance Company paid to her \$51,982 from Danny H. Coleman's basic life and accidental death insurance policies. Additionally, she collected payment from Liberty Life Insurance Company

and First Nationwide Mortgage Corporation of the outstanding principal, interest, escrow and insurance paid on their residence on Michigan Avenue in St. Louis City.

Finally, as alleged in the indictment, in 2000, Karen Coleman solicited one or more individuals to agree to lie to law enforcement officials regarding her use of the proceeds of the insurance policies. In addition, should she be indicted for her role in Danny Coleman's murder, Karen Coleman asked that friend to kill her in order to allow her son and grandson to receive any existing insurance benefits.

Coleman, 54, formerly of St. Louis City, now residing in Arnold, MO, was indicted by a federal grand jury on one felony count of conspiracy to commit murder for hire, and one felony count of murder for hire. Kornhardt, 49, formerly of Arnold, MO, now residing in Dittmer, MO, was indicted on the same charges. The defendants are expected to appear in federal court on Tuesday, December 16, 2008, for their perspective arraignments.

If convicted, each count of the indictment carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Hanaway commended the work on the case by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the St. Louis County Police Department; and Assistant United States Attorneys Thomas Dittmeier and Thomas Rea, who are handling the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The charges set forth in an indictment are merely accusations, and each defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.