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Teen and Mother Sentenced After Beating Disabled Man to Death in South Carolina

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— Categories: Crime



A South Carolina mother and her teenage son have been sentenced to decades in prison after pleading guilty to the brutal killing of a disabled man who had been living in their home. The victim, left confined to a wheelchair following an earlier assault, was beaten to death over two days in a shocking case that authorities called “vicious” and “prolonged.”

According to the Fifteenth Circuit Solicitor’s Office, Samantha Watts, 42, and her son, Payton Watts, now 18, admitted to murdering 29-year-old Corey Adam Soles in January 2023. Soles had been staying with the family in Aynor, South Carolina, when the attacks occurred. Officials say the fatal assault took place just days after Payton had previously broken Soles’ leg during a separate confrontation, leaving him unable to walk.

Family Violence

Prosecutors revealed that Soles, already vulnerable and confined to a wheelchair, was subjected to a sustained beating on January 8 and 9. He was hit repeatedly, suffering severe head trauma, while no one in the household intervened or called for help. Soles died from his injuries shortly after the attack ended.

Samantha Watts was described by prosecutors as the ringleader. They said she ran a drug distribution operation and used her teenage son as her personal enforcer. Her influence over the household, including her adult children, played a central role in the escalation of violence. She was sentenced to 45 years in prison, while Payton received a 35-year sentence after being charged as an adult due to the gravity of the crime.

The solicitor's office emphasized how Soles' disability and dependency made the violence especially egregious. "This was a man already rendered helpless. The violence he endured was both sustained and deliberate," officials said in a statement.

Authorities noted that the assault began in one part of the home and continued in another after Soles was moved. No one in the family sought medical help, despite his clear and worsening condition.

Two of Samantha's other children were also charged in connection with the incident. Her 23-year-old daughter, Amber Watts, pleaded guilty to accessory after the fact and was sentenced to five years of probation. Her 21-year-old son, Jonathan Watts, received time served under South Carolina's Youthful Offender Act.

The exact motive behind the killing has not been publicly confirmed. However, investigators believe Samantha exerted tight control over her children and used them to carry out her violent demands. Soles was reportedly staying at the home as a friend of one of the adult children.

The solicitor's office says the household was deeply dysfunctional, and the violence that unfolded there reflects a pattern of control and abuse. While justice has now been served in the courtroom, the case leaves behind a grim legacy for the community and painful questions about how such brutality could go unreported for so long.