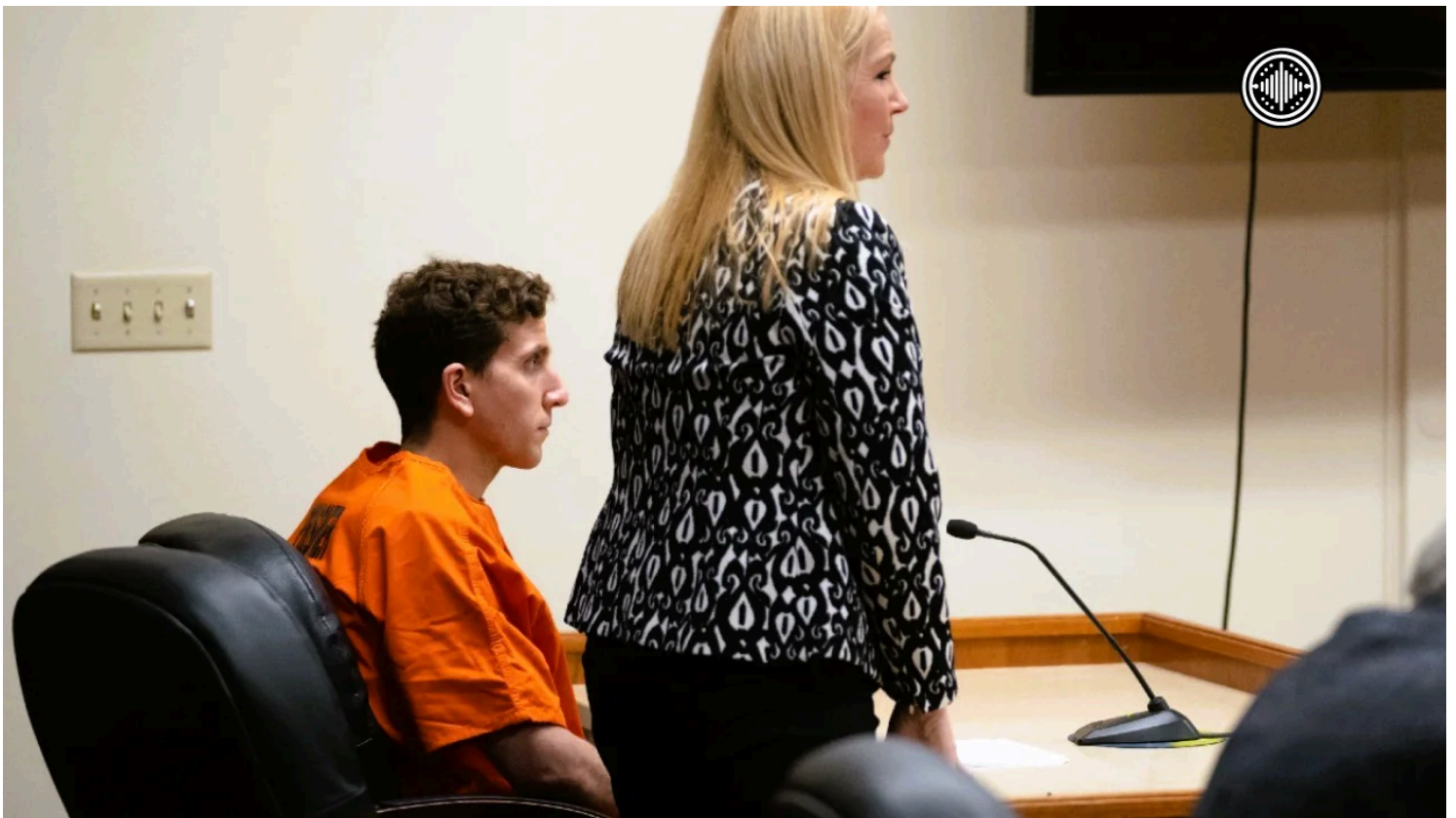


Idaho Victim's Family Slams Plea Deal as a Betrayal of Justice

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— Categories: Crime



MOSCOW, Idaho – The family of Kaylee Goncalves, one of four University of Idaho students killed in 2022, has spoken out against prosecutors for offering a plea deal to the suspect, Bryan Kohberger, that would remove the death penalty as an option.

On Monday, the Goncalves family said they were shocked and angered after receiving notice that Kohberger is expected to plead guilty and be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

“It’s true! We are beyond furious at the State of Idaho,” the family wrote in a Facebook post. “They have failed us. This was very unexpected.”

Kohberger, a former criminology PhD student at Washington State University, is accused of breaking into a Moscow rental home in November 2022 and fatally stabbing Kaylee Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle, and Ethan Chapin. Investigators said his DNA was found on a knife sheath left at the scene.

Under the plea agreement, Kohberger would receive four consecutive life sentences and additional prison time for burglary. He would also give up his right to appeal.

Eighteen-year-old Aubrie Goncalves, Kaylee’s sister, said the proposal felt unfair and too sudden.

“The introduction of this plea deal, just weeks before the scheduled trial, is both shocking and cruel,” she said. “Bryan Kohberger facing life in prison means he still gets to speak, form relationships, and engage with the world. Our loved ones have been silenced forever.”

Prosecutors explained that the deal was intended to save the families from years of appeals and uncertainty. In a letter to the victims’ relatives, officials said, “This resolution is our sincere attempt to seek justice. Your viewpoints weighed heavily in our decision-making process.”

Some experts expressed mixed feelings. Retired FBI agent Jennifer Coffindaffer noted that many observers believed Kohberger would plead guilty to avoid execution by firing squad, which Idaho recently reinstated as a method of capital punishment.

Kay Woodcock, whose grandson JJ Vallow was murdered in another high-profile case, offered her sympathy. “I can understand their anguish, anger, disillusionment, and pain,” she wrote on social media.

Kohberger’s trial was scheduled to begin in August. Instead, a hearing to enter his plea is set for Wednesday.

For the Goncalves family, the plea agreement feels like another loss. “The system has failed these four innocent victims,” Aubrie said.