

SHELTON, JAMES MILTON
November 10, 1946-March 22, 1987

NEWS ITEM: PLATTE COUNTY RECORD-TIMES

Haze Arin, Jr., of San Antonio, Texas, was found guilty of capital murder Nov. 25 for the Mar. 22nd shooting death of former Wheatland resident, James Shelton.

Shelton, 40, was the vice-president of manufacturing at Refrigeration Engineering Corp. in San Antonio and was the husband of Linda Shelton, a kindergarten teacher at West Elementary, who attended the trial.

Capital murder is murder committed while in the act of another crime.

Arin was employed at the Refrigeration Corp. with Shelton. After Shelton surprised Arin on a burglary, Arin kidnapped him and took him to a spot near a railroad track where Shelton was shot twice with a shotgun.

The eight-man, four-woman jury, which deliberated more than 15 hours Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 25 and 26, announced twice that they were deadlocked ten to two for conviction. The judge ordered them to continue their deliberations.

After the jury declared they were deadlocked, the defense lawyers filed two motions for mistrials. The judge overruled them.

The crime of capital murder is punishable by life imprisonment or death by injection. The punishment phase of the trial began Tuesday and after reviewing Arin's character background and prior offenses, the jury will answer two questions pertaining to whether Arin is a continuing threat to society and whether or not he committed the crime intentionally.

If the answers to both questions are "yes", Arin will be put to death. If one of the answers is "no", he'll be given the imprisonment.

Testimony revealed that Arin had told a co-worker where he had hidden the shotgun used to kill Shelton. The co-worker gave the information to the police and the police found the weapon in the creek.

Evidence produced also linked the shotgun shell found near Shelton's body to shells police discovered at the home of a friend of Arin's.

A friend of Arin's testified that Arin arrived at her home late March 22 and tried to get her husband to help remove two tanks from the company truck Arin had stolen. The husband testified that Arin approached him about selling the truck and air compressors belonging to the company.

He said he and Arin expected to get at least \$2000 for the truck and planned to use the money to buy cocaine. He called the police after learning Shelton was found dead and he later received \$1000 reward for his assistance in the case.

A passer-by testified while walking outside his home near the railroad tracks, he heard two gunfire blasts and saw a truck drive past him. He could not identify the driver of the truck, but wrote the license plate identification on a dirty windshield of an abandoned car.

A match was made to the truck which was stolen from the company.

The defense attorneys did not call any witnesses to the stand and refused to comment after the verdict was reached.