

From Page 1A GUILTY

Tim Coleman announced the guilty verdict.

Law enforcement developed evidence that Embry and Stewart had been in a relationship.

Embry was reported by relatives as missing on May 11, 2021, the day before his body was found, and a number of law enforcement witnesses testified at the three-day trial about searching the woods near his home and a nearby creek where he was known to fish before his body was found in his home on Caneyville Road.

The body was found in the shower, stuffed into a garbage bag with a blanket and quilt wrapped around it, covered by a shower curtain and miscellaneous other items.

Embry's hands were bound at the wrists with three belts, another belt was found wrapped around his neck and multiple stab wounds were also documented, though an autopsy determined strangulation to be the cause of death.

KSP Trooper Graham Rutherford testified that the home appeared disheveled when he entered it, noting that there was only one clear path leading in from the front door.

Butler County Commonwealth's Attorney Blake Chambers advanced the theory that Stewart was motivated to kill Embry for his money.

Multiple prosecution witnesses testified that Embry did not bank, keeping cash on hand instead.

He had received a financial settlement after being disabled when he was hit by a truck, had sold a pickup truck for more than \$21,000 a few months prior to his death and had recently received a COVID-era federal stimulus check, witnesses said.

Embry, who was known to enjoy fishing and whittling, was last seen alive May 8, 2021, by a neighbor.

Two days later, before Embry was reported missing but after he was believed to have been killed, multiple neighbors and relatives knocked on Embry's door, but there was no answer and the windows to the home were covered.

Chambers told jurors that Stewart was likely inside the house during that time.

"(Stewart) was going through every item in his house trying to find his money," Chambers said.

When KSP located Stewart and took her to KSP Post 3 headquarters in Bowling Green for an interview, detectives found \$2,141 in cash and a small amount of methamphetamine in her possession.

Detectives recovered a duffel bag from a treeline near a Butler County church where Stewart reported spending a night after leaving Embry's home; Embry's wallet and driver's license were found inside the bag.

Jurors were played portions of a three-hour interview of Stewart con-

ducted by KSP detectives Shae Foley and Joshua Amos.

Stewart, who at the time had not been charged with a crime, gave a general timeline of her actions in the days before and after Embry's death.

She made no admissions, however, regarding how Embry died.

"I know Michael was killed in his house, I know you were there, I want to know why," Amos said during the interview, which Stewart met with silence. "You can't bottle it up, you've gotta tell somebody and we're here to hear it."

Police charged Stewart with murder after that interview, and Chambers argued that her conduct during that interview aroused suspicion.

"When (Stewart) is interviewed, she has zero problem remembering certain things, but when the questions get tough because they implicate her, she freezes and asks to hear the question again," Chambers said Thursday during his closing argument.

After she was arrested and booked into Butler County Jail, Stewart contacted KSP and asked to give a statement.

Foley, the lead investigator, and Detective Jonathan Carlock went to the jail to interview Stewart, who claimed that she stabbed and choked Embry after waking up to him sexually assaulting her.

During that interview, Stewart claimed the slaying happened about a day after the alleged assault and that the two had talked about building a life together.

Asked by the detectives if Embry was killed because of the sexual assault, Stewart said it was not directly because of that.

Stewart testified at trial, where she maintained that she had been assaulted and told jurors that she was bound by her ankles, but had removed those belts and used them on Embry, who she claimed had tried to attack her with a knife almost immediately after the alleged assault.

Stewart's defense team of attorneys Eric Clark, Alyson McDavitt and David Graf of the Department of Public Advocacy, advanced the argument that Stewart acted in self-defense, but Chambers argued that Stewart's testimony was inconsistent with her police interview about the incident and called the whole account of a sexual assault into question.

"I don't believe a sexual assault occurred, because the story makes no sense, it's not corroborated by the evidence and she contradicts herself in her timeline," Chambers said during his closing argument.

The investigation turned up at least six people who came into contact with Stewart between the last time Embry was seen alive and her arrest five days later, and Chambers pointed out that none of them recounted being told by Stewart about an alleged assault.

Stewart will be formally sentenced May 13.

FRANKFORT

Child killed after being swept away walking to bus stop

CHANDA VENO
The State Journal

FRANKFORT — A search and rescue mission ended the way no one wanted Friday morning after a 9-year-old boy was swept up in floodwaters while walking to the school bus stop.

The incident happened in the area of Hickory Hills Apartments at around 6:35 a.m. when Gabriel Andrews was caught in floodwaters, Frankfort Police Assistant Chief Scott Tracy told reporters at a mid-morning press conference at the police station.

"The first Frankfort PD officers arrived on the scene shortly after along with Frankfort Fire and EMS and they conducted an extensive search and rescue operation," Tracy said. "At approximately 8:45 a.m. this morning emergency crews recovered the missing juvenile who was confirmed deceased."

Franklin County Coroner Will Harrod said his body was recovered approximately ½-mile from where he was swept up. Harrod pronounced

him dead at the scene at 9:16 a.m. An autopsy is planned for Saturday morning, with results expected to take 16-20 weeks.

Frankfort Police, Frankfort Fire and EMS, Frankfort/Franklin County Emergency Management, Franklin County Sheriff's Office and volunteers spent more than two hours looking for the child and the Franklin County Coroner's Office is handling the remaining details, which were expected to be released Friday afternoon.

"We are deeply saddened at this horrific tragedy that claimed the life of one of our students. The entire Franklin County Schools system is praying for the family, friends of those directly affected by the events this morning," FCS Superintendent Mark Kopp said. "We are more than a school system, we're a family at Franklin County Schools and we share this loss together."

"At this time we are working with support staff at our schools and offering services to our students, faculty and staff, who need assistance during this

time. "We are eternally grateful for our community first responders from both city and county agencies, who selflessly responded to assist in this situation," he added.

According to the National Weather Service, more than ¾-inch of rain fell during a thunderstorm that hit Frankfort between 5:53 a.m. and 6:53 a.m.

"On behalf of the City of Frankfort I would like to offer our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and everyone who has been affected by this tragedy. I know this tragedy is going to affect our entire community and we all come together and grieve together," Mayor Layne Wilkerson stated.

"We encourage our community to offer their support, their prayers and their kindness not only to the grieving family today but in the days ahead and it's also important to support each other as well. This is a time to come together and remain diligent and remember that we are still in a continuing weather event."

From Page 1A RAIN

In Warren County, the Interstate 165 exit onto Russellville Road was closed and barricades were set up on Russellville Road near Western Kentucky University.

Flooding also caused area school districts to close. Warren County Public Schools utilized an NTI day on Friday due to flooding.

Butler County, Edmonson County and portions of northern Logan, Barren and Warren Counties were under a flash flood warning Friday. Simpson and Allen Counties were under a flood watch along with southern portions of Warren, Logan and Barren Counties, according to the National Weather Service.

Rain and storms were in the forecast until Sunday night, with NWS Louisville placing a flood warning until Monday night.

Warren County Emergency Management Director Ronnie Pearson told the Daily News Friday morning that his office was working closely with emergency services and encouraged residents to avoid driving through standing water.

"There are going to be places where water will stand and hasn't stood in a long time," Pearson said, adding that emergency personnel had worked "seven or eight" rescues just Friday morning.

Pearson said he had heard of no



GRACE MCDOWELL / Daily News

A car sits in a flooded ditch on the corner of Sumpter Avenue and Normal Street on Friday morning. **More photos at bgdailynews.com**

injuries or fatalities due to flooding.

Katie McKee, public information officer for the Bowling Green Fire Department, said BGFED personnel had responded to 10 rescues for people trapped in cars since the early morning hours Friday, many of which were in the Russellville Road and Morgantown Road area.

BGFED urged residents to exercise caution.

"Please use caution when approaching roadways covered in water," the department said in a statement. "It's difficult to determine the depth of water which can quickly result in your vehicle submerging under water."

"Turn around, don't drown."

From Page 1A ROADS

Road. More than \$319,000 is allotted for "flex" funds that the county can use to repair and resurface county roads.

The fiscal court magistrates also took action Thursday on items expected to upgrade both county government facilities and emergency preparedness.

They approved advertising for bids for remodeling the county's Sugar Maple Square building and approved spending \$70,020 to purchase two more Community Outdoor Warning Sirens (COWS).

Advertisement for bids on remodeling Sugar Maple Square will begin April 14. Gorman expects bids to be opened May 6, and he aims for construction to start in June.

"We're looking to remodel approximately 30,000 square feet that the Sheriff's Office will occupy," Gorman said. "There will also be some cosmetic upgrades to the outside. I think people will be pleased with the final result."

The bid advertisement follows fiscal court's approval in December of the

\$104,250 bid of Bowling Green-based DRF (Design, Realize, and Furnish) Architecture to provide architectural and engineering services for a remodel of Sugar Maple Square that will turn a large portion of the building into new headquarters for the county Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office had already moved its Criminal Investigations Department and some other functions to the 56,848-square-foot building that county government purchased in 2021 for \$1.4 million.

More changes could be coming to Sugar Maple Square, according to Gorman.

"There are opportunities to expand the services offered in that building," he said. "We will continue to look at opportunities for other county departments out there."

Gorman and the six county magistrates will also be looking at how to best utilize the former Charles M. Moore Insurance building at 1007 State St., and adjoining property that had been home to the Kerrick Bachert law firm and the local office of U.S. Sen. Rand Paul before being destroyed by fire and later purchased by the county.

"We're still looking at long-range plans for construction there," Gorman said. "In the next fiscal year, we'll tackle that and we'll have a better idea. It will be a couple of years down the road."

The purchase of two more outdoor warning sirens will give the county 36 of the COWS devices that warn residents of weather emergencies, and county Emergency Management Coordinator Ronnie Pearson said more could be coming as he pursues grant funding and public-private partnerships.

In other action at Thursday's meeting, the magistrates approved the Warren County Drug Task Force's purchase of four total vehicles from Chevrolet, Dodge and Ford dealers. The total purchase price of \$164,159 is offset by the December auction of used Task Force vehicles and vehicles seized in drug arrests.

The magistrates also approved spending \$30,849.30 to Harp Enterprises for election machine equipment maintenance.

Warren Fiscal Court is next scheduled to meet on Thursday, April 24 at 9 a.m.

From Page 1A BILL

That's in addition to other annual evaluations required of university faculty, according to the handbook.

Western Kentucky University Philosophy Professor Audrey Anton, one of the petition signees, told the Daily News that the legislation "is redundant at best and short-sighted at worst."

"It is redundant because tenured professors and presidents are already reviewed often," she said. "It is short-sighted because governmental interference (and that's

what this is) in the shared governance of institutions of higher education will drive talent away from Ky.'s public colleges and universities."

The WKU faculty handbook lays out processes for removing tenured and untenured faculty, and while untenured faculty serve at WKU's discretion, the university has "a commitment to successively reappoint" a tenured faculty member.

Generally and practically speaking, it rarely happens. At WKU, the last attempt to dismiss a tenured professor, in 2022, fell short in an 0-8 vote by the Board of Regents. WKU confirmed that it hasn't fired any tenured faculty

in at least two decades.

WKU stated that it's committed to supporting employees, including tenured faculty, and "does not foresee any changes in the importance (it places) on tenure as a result of this legislation."

The law's opponents also contend it'll hamper recruitment of skilled faculty. One of the intentions of tenure is to make the faculty profession more attractive, and Beshear acknowledged as much in his veto message — stating that the bill will "limit employment protections of our postsecondary institution teachers" and "limit Kentucky's ability to hire the best people"

Western stated it doesn't antic-

ipate faculty recruitment will be impeded by this new law.

"Campus leadership will now thoughtfully assess what, if any, effect legislation that has just passed may have on campus operations," Western Kentucky University wrote in a statement. "Regarding HB 424, it appears our existing evaluation procedures already comply with this legislation, so we will just need the Board of Regents to formally adopt them."

WKU Faculty Senate Chair Gordon "Mac" McKerral, another petition signee, said that since the process is already in place at WKU, he anticipates no issues with compliance.

"The larger issue is lawmakers who know little about higher education in all its forms trying to micromanage it," he said.

McKerral added that while the law doesn't change the process WKU uses for evaluating and potentially removing tenured faculty, he is concerned that it feeds into the larger picture nationally of a narrative that challenges the value of a college degree for costing too much and leaving people unable to get jobs.

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System stated that its policies already comply with the legislation, so it will not be making any changes.