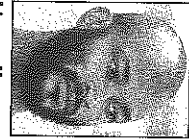


HOWELL PLEADS NOT G

Facing five counts for first-degree murder, the 34-year-old will next appear in court Dec. 11.

By GLENNE E. RICE
The Kansas City Star

A man accused of killing five people earlier this year in the Woodbridge area of south Kansas City was arraigned Monday in Jackson County Circuit Court. Brandon Howell, 34, did not speak during the three-minute



Howell

hearing. His attorney, Patrick Berri-gan, told the court that Howell was pleading not guilty to all charges, including five counts of first-degree murder.

Prosecutors originally charged Howell with three counts of first-degree murder in the Sept. 2 shotgun slayings of Susan Choucroun, 69, Lorene Hurst, 88, and her son

Darrel Hurst, 63. At that time, prosecutors also charged Howell with assault for attacks on George and Anna Taylor.

Both Taylors died a week after being attacked. On Friday, a grand jury amended the two assault charges to two first-degree murder charges.

Howell also faces charges of burglary, illegal possession of weapons, vehicle theft and four counts of armed criminal action. In court Monday, Howell wore a

Heroin ring leads to prison term for Kansas City man

Matthew Davis, 48, helped distribute drugs that led to death of Joshua Webb.

By MATT CAMPBELL
The Kansas City Star

A Kansas City man with a long history of foul deeds was sentenced Monday to 30 years in federal prison without parole for his part in a heroin trafficking ring that resulted in the death of a man.

Matthew Davis, 48, was convicted in April along with Timothy L. Kirlin, 34, also known as Jim Curlon, last week was sentenced to life in prison.

Kirlin traveled to Dallas to obtain heroin and cocaine for resale in the Kansas City area. Davis, who was charged with conspiracy to distribute the drugs, received them from Kirlin and distributed them.

Joshua Webb died in 2002 from heroin he obtained from the ring. Kirlin was ordered to pay \$17,000 in restitution for funeral costs.

Davis, who is from a wealthy family, had made as much as \$8,000 a month from a trust fund. He previously pleaded guilty to abandoning the corpse of his girlfriend, Amber McGathey, after she died of a

drug overdose in 2004. He left the body in the back of his Jeep in the River Market area. At one point Davis drove the vehicle while he went out with another woman with the body in the back.

The body was found after it had decomposed for days.

Davis was initially sentenced for that in state court to 22 years but a judge set aside the conviction amid allegations of prosecutorial misconduct. He was convicted again and sentenced to four years, about a year less than he had already served.

In a civil lawsuit, a Jackson County jury found that Davis should pay McGathey's family \$500,000 for mistreating a corpse.

In 2010 Davis was convicted of driving while intoxicated. And in 2011 a Kansas judge sentenced him to 39 months in prison for almost running over a police officer while speeding away from an Olathe restaurant where he had stolen a bucket of beer. He drove to a house in Olathe and was involved in a standoff with police that lasted for hours.

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BUMS OF EVENTS ACROSS KANSAS CITY, SEE COM