

Terry Lenamon on the Death Penalty

Sidebar with a Board Certified Expert Criminal Trial Attorney



Terence M. Lenamon is a Florida Bar certified expert in the area of criminal trial law. With over 17 years experience he has built a reputation as one of Florida's most respected criminal defense lawyers. His defense has been sought by many high-profile clients and has led him through 20 first-degree murder trials and eight death penalty cases. That experience has brought him national recognition as a go-to commentator on death penalty issues. He is the force behind both deathpenaltyblog.com and Florida Capital Resource Center (floridacapitalresourcecenter.org), and can be reached at terry@lenamonlaw.com.

Cheshire Connecticut Home Invasion Trial Brings More Focus to Death Penalty – is there a Political Twist to This?

POSTED ON OCTOBER 21, 2010 BY **TERRY LENAMON**

As the **defense team continues to put on its case for mercy** during the penalty phase of **Steven J. Hayes'** trial for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her two daughters, Michaela and Hayley, more and more media coverage is bringing the aspects of capital punishment advocacy to the public's attention. Which is good.

However, the power of this case isn't just in educating folk on the death penalty – it's also become a major player in the political scene.

Today's **New York Times** writes (**in an article entitled, "Murder Trial Puts Death Penalty in Spotlight in Connecticut Campaigns"**) on the intense national coverage brought to the Connecticut courthouse as the defense's ten (10) days of mitigating evidence and argument is presented: but this isn't a piece focusing on the intricacies of mercy. No, the Times focuses upon the political aspects of the Hayes trial -- and how it may impact the upcoming November 2010 elections.

This, of course, is true.

It is conceivable that this trial may be concluded very, very close to election day -- it's already overlapping absentee voting. And it's something that may well decide who is the next governor of Connecticut.

After all, **Dannel Malloy** is running for Governor of the State of Connecticut as a Democrat who is opposed to the death penalty. This, on the heels of the Republican sitting as Governor, **M. Jodi Rell**, who vetoed the abolishing of the death penalty in that state **cited only one reason for her decision**: the Cheshire Home Invasion case.

Another aspect of **trial by media** to consider: **not only can intense media coverage impact the jury that is empaneled and the verdict (and sentence) that is reached**, it can also reach much further -- to the determination of who sits in the highest offices in our country ...