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MAN TO SERVE LIFE IN PRISON FOR 1986 HOMICIDE OF KINGSTON 15-YEAR-OLD

BROCKTON – A jury has convicted a man on charges that he kidnapped and murdered 15-year-old Tracy Gilpin in 1986, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

Today, after a 12-day trial in Brockton Superior Court, a jury deliberated 5 ½ hours before finding Michael Hand, now 69, on one count each of Murder in the First Degree. Judge Katie Cook Rayburn sentenced Hand to a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole.

Tracy Gilpin of Kingston, was reported missing on October 2, 1986 by her family members. Gilpin's body was found in Myles Standish State Park in Plymouth on October 22, 1986. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner ruled that Gilpin's cause of death was a massive skull fracture and the manner of her death was ruled to be a homicide.

For more than 32 years, State Police Detectives assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, as well as the Plymouth Police and Kingston Police Departments, continued the investigation into the murder of Gilpin. State Police assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office developed information that Hand was a potential witness in the Gilpin case. In March, 2018, State Police traveled to North Carolina to speak with Hand, and together with the assistance of Troutman, N.C. Police and Mooresville, N.C. Police, conducted several interviews with Hand over a number of days. During the interviews, Hand, formerly a Kingston resident, made statements to investigators that could be construed as admissions to the crime. Hand told police he held a gathering at his home the evening that Gilpin was last seen, and told them that he knew Gilpin from the Kingston neighborhood. Hand made statements to police that put him at the crime scene in Myles Standish State Park in Plymouth, and Hand told police that he

picked up a 73-pound boulder and dropped it on Gilpin. Hand identified the rock to investigators in evidence photos.

On March 9, 2018, based on the interviews and information provided by Hand, he was placed under arrest and charged as a fugitive from justice based on an arrest warrant issued for the murder of Tracy Gilpin. Hand waived rendition and was returned to Massachusetts.

“The Gilpin family made it their mission to see that justice was done on behalf of Tracy,” DA Cruz said. “They never gave up hope in this pursuit, and today we got that justice. I commend investigators with the Massachusetts State Police and North Carolina Police on their work on this case. I am hopeful that Tracy can now rest in peace knowing that her killer will spend the rest of his life in prison.”

Assistant District Attorneys Jennifer Sprague and Shanan Buckingham prosecuted the case, with the assistance of Deputy Director of Victim Services Karen Fahy. The case was investigated by State Police Detectives assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney’s Office, with the support and assistance of Kingston Police, Plymouth Police, and Troutman and Mooresville, North Carolina Police Departments.

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