



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Nashville Field Division

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TENNESSEE HITMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MURDER FOR HIRE, ARSON

MEMPHIS, Tenn. - Special Agent in Charge James Cavanaugh of the Nashville Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); David Kustoff, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee; and Tipton County Sheriff J.T. "Pancho" Chumley announced today that a Dyersburg, Tenn., man pleaded guilty to arson and conspiracy to commit a murder for hire that resulted in the 1999 death of a Tipton County woman.

Danny Winberry, 41, is scheduled to be sentenced Jan. 7, 2008, and faces a sentence of up to life imprisonment with no parole.

According to case background and testimony in court, Tipton County resident Billy Johnson hired Winberry to kill Johnson's 62-year-old mother Martha for \$50,000. Johnson paid Winberry \$5,000 in advance, with the remaining money to follow after completion of the murder. Winberry admitted to killing Martha Johnson and burning down her residence. After his mother's death, Billy Johnson collected several hundred thousand dollars from a life insurance payment and from the sale of the farm they owned jointly.

Billy Johnson is currently in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service without bond. He faces charges regarding the use of interstate facilities, mail and interstate travel in relation to murder for hire and perjury.

The case is the result of the combined efforts of ATF, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee State Bomb and Arson and Tipton County Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Steve Parker and Tony Arvin handled prosecution for the United States.

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