By MARSHA SHULER
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ANGOLA — Barring the unexpected, Andrew Lee ‘Flash’ Jones will die in the wee hours of Monday morning in Louisiana’s electric chair for the brutal rape and murder of an 11-year-old Scotlandville girl.

On Friday, two federal courts rejected Jones’ appeals and Gov. Buddy Roemer refused to accept a state Pardon Board recommendation that would delay Jones’ execution until after Sept. 15 — when the state changes its method of carrying out the death sentence from electric chair to lethal injection.

“This man’s justice day has arrived,” Roemer said. “He kidnapped, molested, beat, raped and strangled an 11-year-old child. Prior to that, he had been convicted of aggravated battery, which had been reduced from aggravated rape. He has a violent history. His day of justice has come. This man deserves what he is about to get.”

Jones was sentenced to death in November 1984 for the murder of Tumekia Michelle Jackson, the daughter of Jones’ estranged girlfriend. Monday’s execution date is Jones’ tenth.

Roemer said he will still meet with Jones’ attorneys on Sunday, but does not plan to interfere with the execution unless he hears something dramatically different from the facts of the case as he knows them.

He said he is comfortable using the electric chair for now and has previously advised corrections department officials of his position.

Jones still has an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court pending. But one of his attorneys said earlier Friday that she holds out no hope for success after a federal district judge and the 5th Circuit refused to intervene.

Jones’ attorney Michele Fournet said the clemency appeal is her client’s last chance. She had urged the board to commute Jones’ sentence to life in prison and at the very minimum to postpone it so Jones could die by lethal injection.

The board opted for the lethal injection option with three members favoring it — chairman Yvonne Campbell and members Sally McKissack and W.B. Archambault. Two members voted to commute the sentence to life — Lynise Kennedy and S.P. Davis.

The decision came after an all-day session that centered largely on the question of whether evidence of Jones’ having mental problems would have made a difference when the jury was deciding whether Jones should be sentenced to life in prison or death for the crime.

Jones’ trial attorney David Price said he only recently found out that his client had been medicated before, during and after the murder trial with an anti-psychotic drug. He said that would indicate mental problems that could explain why Jones killed Tumekia Michelle Jackson.

“Even if it falls short of an insanity defense. I think it gives them (the jury) that additional reason that I didn’t have — some reason to give him mercy, give him a life sentence,” Price said.

But John Sinquefield, East Baton Rouge first assistant district attorney, said the evidence would have made no difference to the jury.

“When they found out it was an act of vindictiveness because of an argument with the mother — that he kidnapped, raped, murdered an 11-year-old child, I don’t think any evidence whatsoever would have kept him from getting the death penalty,” Sinquefield said. “I think any jury would have given it to him.”
Authorities said Jones abducted the Jackson child from her grandparents' home in Scotlandville on Feb. 18, 1984, and sexually assaulted her before strangling her. The child's body was found in a canal about 15 hours after her grandparents realized she was missing. She was abducted from her bed as she slept, investigators said.

Jones made a brief statement at the beginning of Friday's hearing. "I know the seriousness of the situation," Jones said. "I take full responsibility for it. I am deeply sorry for the people I hurt."

Under questioning, Jones said he does not recall what happened the night the Jackson girl died. He said he was drunk and had been smoking cigarettes.

"If I hadn't been drunk that never would have happened. I was a totally different person when I got drunk," Jones said. Later, he said "I was unaware of what I was doing."

But Sinquefield said Jones was well aware of what happened and tried to get rid of evidence. He never admitted guilt during trial and also tried to point the finger of blame to two other men, including his stepbrother, Sinquefield said.

Fournet said she hoped the board will conclude that Jones' execution will not heal the families involved or the community. She said the murder of the Jackson girl was "a violent act, the product of a whole universe of problems."

A contingent of Jones' family members testified, pleading for his life. They said an all-white jury was the death knell for Jones.

"At the trial all they wanted to know is did Andrew do this. They didn't want to know about him. Andrew had a problem," said Terry Jones, a sister. Tumekia's grandfather Bankston Caine Jr. sat at the table with Sinquefield.

"I don't feel any mercy for him and I wish to carry out the sentence," he told the board.

Jones' attorneys had pressed in the courts to have the execution cancelled, claiming that Jones was drugged throughout his trial to cover up severe mental problems.

In addition, the attorneys have argued that recent action by the state to replace electrocution with lethal injection is evidence that death in the electric chair is "cruel and unusual punishment."

Andrew Lee 'Flash' Jones, second from left, listens to his sister, Velma Mingo, far right, testify on his behalf. Jones is flanked by his attorneys, Neal Walker, left, and Michele Fournet.