ANGOLA (AP) — During a long career as a law enforcement official, O'Neil Tyler had never seen an execution.

That changed early Thursday, when the execution of Elmo Sonnier became the climax to a story that involved Tyler from the beginning.

Tyler, now carrying the rank of major and the title of chief deputy of the Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office, said he was watching the Alabama-LSU game on that Saturday in November 1977 when his wife sent him to a drugstore on an errand.

While he was away, a call came that two bodies had been found next to a cane field, he said.

Loretta Bourque, 18, and David LeBlanc, 16, were lying face down with bullet holes in the backs of their heads. Tyler took a senior class ring from the finger of the dead boy and traced his identity through that.

He recalled tracing the couple's activities from a high school football game, trying to find out how and why they were killed.

His best lead was the determination that the bullets were fired from a .22-caliber rifle of a type owned by hundreds of people in the area, he said.

The Sonnier brothers were among those owning such a weapon.

A month into the investigation, a city policeman called him and introduced him to an informant who said the Sonnier brothers had killed the youngsters, he said.

He arrested them, and Eddie Sonnier's confession led him to the buried rifle, he said.

Elmo detailed a six-week crime spree around St. Martin and Iberia parishes in which the Sonniers, pretending to be police, held guns on as many as seven couples on lovers' lanes.

In each case, the man was handcuffed to a tree while the woman was raped, Tyler said.

The brothers would take their rifles or shotguns, tell their family they were going hunting, then assault another couple, he said. He has never figured out why they killed LeBlanc and Miss Bourque and not the others, he said.

He is certain, however, that Sonnier's execution is something he will never forget. “How many other people can be involved in a case as one of the investigating officers, as an arresting officer, as a trial witness and now this,” he said.