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PRESS RELEASE

On November 7, 2011 the convictions of Erica Rowe for complicity to murder, aggravated burglary, aggravated robbery, and felonious assault were all affirmed by the Third District Court of Appeals. Rowe had been convicted of the November 2, 2008 home invasion of the residence of Frank and Bette Rios on the northern border of Seneca County. Rowe was sentenced in April 2010 to a prison term of thirty-five years to life.

Rowe had been assisted by others in the commission of the offenses but at this time insufficient evidence exists to allow for those others to be prosecuted. Both the Seneca County Sheriff's Office and the Seneca County Prosecutor's Office will continue to keep the file open and the matter is still actively under investigation.

The evidence presented at trial included Rowe's admission that she had aided another person in the home invasion. Since the trial additional investigation has determined that it was Rowe herself who entered the residence and physically attacked Mrs. Rios and beat Mr. Rios so severely as to cause his death. Rowe herself has confirmed with law enforcement that it was she who was the one who had wielded the bat which inflicted the serious injuries to Mrs. Rios and killed Mr. Rios. Prosecuting Attorney Derek W. DeVine stated: "We knew and were able to prove that Ms. Rowe was involved and responsible for these crimes. We now know that she wasn't just there helping; she was the one swinging the bat inflicting the injuries and death."

Even though the additional investigation has determined that Rowe was the primary offender, she will face no additional charges. "The charge and penalty for complicity to commit the crimes is the same as for the primary offender", said DeVine.

If anybody has any information regarding this matter, you are encouraged to contact Detective Sgt. Kevin Reinbolt at the Seneca County Sheriff's Office (419) 447-3456.