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Woman gets death sentence in fetus-snatching murder

- Story Highlights
- Federal judge imposes death sentence recommended by jury
- Lisa Montgomery is just third woman on federal death row
- She befriended pregnant woman, killed her, took baby from womb

By Bill Mears
CNN Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- A woman convicted of murdering an expectant mother and kidnapping the baby from her womb received a federal death sentence.

U.S. District Judge Gary Fenner handed down the sentence in Kansas City, Missouri, on Friday. Lisa Montgomery becomes only the third woman on federal death row.

Montgomery was convicted in October of the gruesome 2004 killing of Bobbie Jo Stinnett. The 23-year-old woman was found strangled in her rural home in Skidmore, Missouri. Her womb was cut open and the unborn child was missing.

A nationwide search and intense media coverage followed. Montgomery was found in neighboring Kansas, where she had claimed the baby, which survived, as her own.

Prosecutors claimed at trial that Montgomery had first contacted Stinnett on the Internet, through their mutual interest in breeding rat terrier dogs, and later went to Stinnett's house.

A jury convicted the 39-year-old woman and recommended the [death penalty](#), which the judge imposed Friday.

The other women awaiting execution are:

- Angela Johnson, who was sentenced in 2005 along with a man for the murders of two girls in Iowa.
- Valerie Friend, who was sentenced last year along with a man for the drug-related murder of a woman in West Virginia.

Neither Iowa nor West Virginia have the death penalty for state murder convictions.

The U.S. Justice Department stepped up capital prosecutions after Congress passed specific legislation in 1994, and 55 people are now on federal death row, convicted in many cases of drug-related murders.

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