

# Jury selected in Fla. ninja slaying trial of wealthy couple with nine special-needs children



AP Photo/Escambia Sheriff's Department  
Leonard Patrick Gonzalez Jr.



AP Photo/The Pensacola News Journal, Katie King

Ashley Markham, 26, second from left, with her husband, Blue, reacts as Sheriff David Morgan announces in Pensacola, Fla. on Tuesday July 14, 2009, the seventh arrest in the murder of a Florida couple known for adopting children with special needs.



AP Photo/The Pensacola News Journal, Karen Cawthon

This 2005 picture shows Byrd and Melanie Billings with their children, 10 adopted and two biological, at their home in Beulah, Fla. Melanie is holding a photograph of their late child, Bailey. The Panhandle couple were shot in their rural home while eight of their children slept.  
By MELISSA NELSON

The Associated Press

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PENSACOLA, Fla. — A jury has been selected for the trial of a Pensacola-area karate instructor charged with leading a group of men dressed as ninjas who robbed and killed a wealthy couple with nine special-needs children.

A judge swore in the 12-member jury and one alternate late Monday after a day of interviewing the pool of about 200 potential members.

Opening statements in 36-year-old Leonard Patrick Gonzalez Jr.'s trial are expected to start Tuesday.

Gonzalez could get the death penalty if convicted of organizing the 2009 robbery. Investigators say the couple was shot and killed while their nine special-needs children cowered or slept nearby.

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