



## Mobile judge delays bail decision for man accused in Citronelle slaying (UPDATE)

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[MOBILE, Alabama](#) -- A judge [again delayed](#) a decision today about setting bail for [Michael Crocker](#), who is accused of shooting a man to death in Citronelle, then cutting out his own tongue to confuse investigators.

Mobile County District Judge Charlie McKnight said he must first determine whether Crocker poses a flight risk — and that requires determining whether he moved to Texas in violation of his bail on a previous criminal case.

Crocker, 46, [was arrested this week](#) in the 2007 shooting death of Stephen O'Neal Perret, a manager at Vulcan Industrial Services, where Crocker was a part owner.

Crocker was Perret's friend, neighbor and boss at Vulcan. Both men lived on Dogwood Lane, near where Perret's body was found slumped inside Crocker's pickup truck.

Crocker moved to Nacogdoches, Texas, in 2009 while out on bail in a theft case. He was arrested and accused of embezzling \$200,000 from Vulcan, although four years later, a grand jury has not issued an indictment.

Investigators have indicated that the embezzlement and murder cases are connected, but they've declined to be specific.

The murder case took a bizarre twist just after Perret's body was discovered, when investigators announced that Crocker, their prime suspect, had cut out part of his own tongue using a razor blade to throw them off his trail.

This morning, Mobile County Assistant District Attorney Martha Tierney said that when he was being sought for tax evasion earlier this year, local authorities had to enlist help from four law enforcement agencies in Mississippi and Texas to track him down. He was reportedly living in a trailer behind his daughter's house in Texas.

Tierney said he had never kept his housing or utilities in his own name.

The prosecutor requested \$500,000 bail, of which half would have to be paid in cash.

Crocker's attorney, Skip Brutkiewicz, has insisted that Crocker consistently kept him and a bonding company aware of his location, and sheriff's deputies could have asked him where Crocker could be found.

Crocker wrote a letter in 2009 to the Mobile County Sheriff's Department, updating them on his move to Texas and requesting that the department return his guns that had been confiscated.

Outside court, Brutkiewicz said that he believes prosecutors are putting pressure on Crocker by trying to keep him in jail.

"They are having a very hard time proving a murder case against this man," Brutkiewicz said, and they're keeping him locked up "in order to gain an advantage in the murder case."

Tierney, though, argued that the Alabama Rules of Criminal Procedure ban defendants out on bail from leaving the state without permission from a judge.

McKnight said he must ask Mobile County Circuit Judge Joseph Johnston whether he granted that permission.

Crocker and his wife are also charged with tax evasion. Prosecutors say they earned \$750,000 in unreported income.

Crocker was arrested in May, but remained in jail until this week, when he finally posted his bail. Minutes after he was released from Mobile County Metro Jail, though, sheriff's deputies arrested him on the murder charge.

Perret, 31, had a wife and three children, who are now 15, 14 and 11.

This afternoon, Crocker was still in jail with no bail. It wasn't clear exactly when the judge would issue a ruling.

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