

COUNTY OF BERRIEN  
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Press Release

**December 7, 2017**

**Niles man charged in wife's death**

On Sunday, August 13 at approximately 5:56 PM officers were called to the residence at 1429 Lawndale Avenue in Niles Township for a possible shooting. Upon arrival officers discovered that 55 year old Carla Jean Lewis of 1429 Lawndale Avenue had been shot and was pronounced dead at the scene. An autopsy performed Monday morning revealed 5 gunshot wounds including one to the head which was fatal. The caller, who was at the scene upon officers' arrival, was her 49 year old husband, John Benton Lewis, of that address.

Investigators requested the assistance of the Michigan State Police crime lab mobile evidence team who processed the house for forensic evidence.

While John Lewis originally reported this to authorities as a home invasion by strangers who shot and killed Carla Lewis, the results of the forensic examination of the crime scene, the autopsy, and witness interviews, resulted in John Lewis now been charged with First Degree Premeditated Murder, a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole.

This incident remains under investigation by the Berrien County Sherriff's Office and Berrien County Homicide Task Force.

During this investigation and prior to murder charges being lodged against John Lewis, it was discovered that Lewis was not in compliance with the Medical Marijuana Act and was also charged with the Manufacture of Marijuana, a 4 year felony. At his arraignment on that charge on Tuesday bond was set at \$7,000, 10%. His pre-exam conference was set for August 23, 2017 and his preliminary examination hearing for August 29, both at 8:30 in Berrien County's Drug Court.

At Lewis' arraignment today on First Degree Premeditated Murder bond was set at \$1,000,000.00 with GPS monitoring. His pre-exam conference was set for August 23, 2017 and his preliminary examination hearing for August 29, both at 8:30 in Berrien County's Niles court.

The charges are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

Press release available at County Web site:

<http://www.berriencounty.org/ProsecutingAttorney/pressreleases>