

# Jenner beach killer Shaun Gallon sentenced to life in prison

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Standing in a Sonoma County courtroom, Chris and Kathy Cutshall spoke their first words to the man who killed their daughter and her fiancé, young Midwestern visitors to the coast near Jenner in 2004 when they were shot as they lay in sleeping bags on the sand.

Shaun Michael Gallon walked away from the bodies. Thirteen years would pass before Gallon would confess to authorities that he shot Lindsay Cutshall and Jason Allen on the beach.

On Monday, Gallon looked up from his seat in Sonoma County Superior Court as Kathy Cutshall held up the wedding dress her daughter would have worn had she lived: a sweet and gauzy gown, white with pink flowers, glittering with beads.

Cutshall and Allen were to be married back home in Ohio in a ceremony in 2004. Instead, the two families held a funeral.

“I brought this because it is empty,” Kathy Cutshall said to Gallon, holding up her daughter’s dress.

After an emotional 2 1/2-hour hearing, Judge Robert LaForge sentenced Gallon to serve three consecutive life terms without parole plus another 94 years in state prison for his confessed series of baffling crimes: the murders of Cutshall and Allen; the 2017 killing of his brother, Shamus Gallon; and an attempted murder in 2004 of a man in Monte Rio.

“It’s crystal clear to me you deserve to spend the rest of your life in prison — and then some,” LaForge said.

Gallon, 40, did not speak during the sentencing hearing, held one month after he entered no-contest pleas and admitted guilt in the crimes. His mother, Susan Gallon of Forestville, did not attend. She was in the home when Gallon shot and killed her younger son in March 2017 — a burst of violence without provocation that ultimately led to Gallon’s arrest and confession to the Jenner murders.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Spencer Brady, his voice breaking with emotion, said Susan Gallon “has so much trauma from this event, she cannot make it” to the hearing.

Gallon lived with his family in the Russian River area for most of his troubled life.

He was arrested more than a dozen times over the years for a variety of crimes from poaching abalone to assaulting a man with a bow and arrow.

He was known for bizarre, survivalist behavior and killing animals beyond typical hunting.

His attorney, deputy public defender Jeff Mitchell, asked the judge to consider Gallon’s history of mostly untreated mental illness, including involuntary admittance to the county’s emergency psychiatric ward and reports from multiple psychologists.

Mitchell said the probation department omitted Gallon’s statements of remorse from its presentencing report — an investigation into his life to help the judge make sentencing decisions. Mitchell referred to an instance

when Gallon was asked if he felt bad about what he did and replied “Oh, every day. I feel bad about it every day.”

LaForge later said he detected no remorse in Gallon’s statements, which “explain how he felt and nothing else.”

“Heartless,” LaForge added. “I could go on and on, but I do not need to.”

Instead, it was the Cutshalls and the Allens who brought heart into the courtroom.

In a video played for the court, Lindsay Cutshall, 22, and Jason Allen, 26, were bubbling with excitement as they told of a near-death experience while whitewater rafting in the Sierra. The couple were counselors at a Christian adventure camp.

Cutshall says in the video they were paddling for their lives as the river pushed them into a dangerous spot when, they believed, God intervened.

“The angel was wearing Chacos,” Allen joked in a reference to popular water shoes.

“He pushed us to where we needed to be,” said Cutshall, laughing.

The videos and photos show the couple, youthful, goofy, in photos from their wilderness adventures and with family at home.

Kathy Cutshall spoke to the court of her grief that their surviving daughter lost a sister. She said she mourned for Gallon’s mother because “in one senseless act, he took two sons away from her.”

But mostly she spoke of Lindsay Cutshall, recalling her sweet voice and devout faith.

Chris Cutshall read a letter written by Bob and Delores Allen, Jason Allen’s parents who live in Hamilton, Michigan.

“Shaun Gallon broke our hearts beyond description,” the letter read. “Our family changed forever that horrible night. A huge part of us was gone.”

All of the family members said they harbored no hatred for Gallon because their faith in a Christian God allowed them to let those feelings go, though they would never live without grieving the loss of their children.

John Robles, who was the intended target of the makeshift bomb Gallon placed on his parked car outside his Monte Rio home in 2004, also spoke to the court. His wife, Parvoneh Leval, was the one who went outside to the car that morning and was injured in the bomb’s blast. Robles expressed his condolences to the Allen and Cutshall families and called Gallon “cowardly.”

“This is the most freedom you’re ever going to see again,” Robles said to Gallon. “I’m going to go drink beer and eat fried chicken, but you only have one good day left and I think we all know what that is.”

One detail about the circumstances of Gallon’s crimes revealed in court Monday tested the Cutshall family’s graciousness. Prosecutors played an audio recording of Gallon’s confession in which he describes shooting Allen first. He said Lindsay Cutshall sat up, looked at her boyfriend and made a sound.

The Cutshalls had always imagined their daughter was asleep when she was slain and unaware of the evil before her.

Kathy Cutshall wept.

Chris Cutshall pointed at Gallon and told him that he holds no power over their lives.

He spoke about his love for his daughter, her integrity and promise.

“He doesn’t have to face the wrath of a piddling little father,” said Cutshall, who wears one of his daughter’s rings on his pinky finger.

“He has to face the wrath of God.”

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