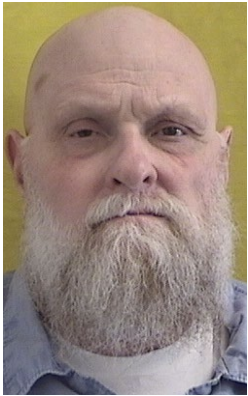


TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor
Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter
UPDATE, DEC. 21, 2023

Convicted murderer Gary Betz denied parole

A convicted murderer from Trumbull County has failed in his fourth request for parole from prison.



The Ohio Adult Parole Authority has extended Gary Allen Betz, scheduling his next parole hearing for November 2025, according to information released this week to the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office.

Betz, 69, is incarcerated in Marion Correctional Institution serving a 22-year-to-life prison sentence for convictions of aggravated murder and aggravated robbery. Betz was guilty of the shotgun shooting death of Lake Milton area tavern owner Ron Goche in late 1976.

Prosecutor Dennis Watkins is pleased with the decision by the state parole board.

"Any day that a convicted repeat violent offender like Betz can be kept off the streets is a good day for Trumbull County," Watkins said.

Watkins has stated in previous letters to the parole board that Betz was paroled twice from prison before murdering Goche and robbing him of \$138 in bar receipts.

The prosecutor called Betz's crime "one of the worst of the worst cold-blooded, premeditated murders of a helpless person one person could envision." After spending 30 years in prison for the killing of Goche, Betz was paroled for a third time in 2007 despite strong opposition from the victim's family and the prosecutor's office.

The criminal streak continued as Betz landed himself in more trouble while on parole. Betz violated terms of his release by accumulating three DUI charges in 2008, 2010 and 2011. He was sent back to prison following these offenses.

PAST RECORD

In Nov. 20, 1975, records show Betz was sentenced to the Ohio State Penitentiary for a second time on a breaking and entering conviction in Columbiana County. He

was released from his second prison term's parole supervision about a month before Goche was murdered, Watkins said. Within six years' time, Betz does back-to-back-to-back prison sentences.

Testimony at the trial before a three-judge panel in 1977 showed Betz shot Goche in the face with a sawed-off shotgun at point-blank range, after entering Goche's bar — the Riviera Inn — to rob it. A witness overheard the bar owner tell Betz to take the day's receipts of \$138 and he wouldn't do anything to him. Betz fatally shot Goche anyway, Watkins said. Betz's last words to the victim were: "... don't worry, we won't get in trouble."

"Only a sociopath could commit such a crime, and that is why he always will be a risk to the public," Watkins wrote to the parole board. *"Please don't release him on parole for the fourth time. You're dealing with quintessential evil."*

According to the case file, Betz told the parole board in 2007 he had an autoimmune deficiency that causes skin and joint problems, and that 50 percent of victims die within five years, but Watkins said he was not allowed to examine medical evidence of the condition.

In fact, Betz apparent joint problem didn't prevent him from repeatedly driving a vehicle drunk after he was released for a third time on parole in 2007. The DUIs returned him to prison. One police officer who arrested Betz gave him the moniker "super drunk."

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