

Reward: Village will wait until second trial done to decide

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other donors, but he divided the money among the victims' families years ago when he thought the killers never would be found.

Luna was convicted Thursday after a 14-day trial and nearly 12 hours of jury deliberations. The jury will hear arguments next week on whether he should be executed for shooting to death the two owners of the Palatine restaurant and their five employees Jan. 8, 1993.

The man accused of being his accomplice, Jim Degorski, is being tried separately and also could face the death penalty if convicted. Degorski has pleaded not guilty.

On Friday, Wagner said a decision on the Palatine reward money likely won't come until Degorski is tried. His court date has not yet been set.

Once that trial is complete, the village will reconvene a committee to decide how to disburse the reward money, Wagner said.

In all, more than \$140,000 has been pledged, Wagner said, including \$33,000 in cash sitting in a village bank account, according to records.

But figuring out who should get the money may be tricky, he said.

Anne Lockett, Degorski's former girlfriend, came forward with her story in 2002, giving

"I absolutely don't think (Anne) Lockett should get a dime. She waited for nine years to turn him in. The poor families suffered for nine years."

Brad Von Sydow, whose business contributed to reward

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Manny Castro, father of victim Michael Castro

authorities their first indication the two men committed the crime. They were arrested shortly afterward. DNA and print evidence also tied Luna to the crime scene, and he gave a videotaped confession.

Lockett told police the men excitedly detailed the crime to her a few weeks after it was committed. She says Degorski threatened to kill her if she told police, but she dated him for another year and then spent about seven years traveling the country.

Lockett's best friend, Melissa Oberle, is credited with persuading her to step forward. Oberle made the first call to Palatine police after Lockett told her of the men's confession in 2002.

Witness Eileen Bakalla told

police about her knowledge of the crime after Luna and Degorski were arrested. Bakalla testified she helped the two men divvy up cash stolen from Brown's the night of the killings.

Bakalla received a letter from prosecutors saying she didn't face criminal charges before testifying against Luna. Bakalla said she didn't want Degorski to go to jail because they were friends. In fact, she said that about two months before his arrest, they were on a vacation together with friends.

Wagner said that just because the women eventually came forward, that doesn't mean any of them will get the reward.

"We could return it to people," he said. "We could donate it."

More than 100 local people and businesses gave money to the reward fund.

Doctors at Northwest Community Hospital gave \$15,000. \$3,000 was collected from a restaurant in Florida, and \$1,000 came from an unidentified donor in Wisconsin.

One of the contributors was local business Von Sydow's Moving & Storage in Palatine. Owner Brad Von Sydow gave \$100 to the fund back then and now says no one should get the money besides the families.

"I absolutely don't think Lockett should get a dime," he said Friday. "She waited for nine years to turn him in. The poor families suffered for nine years."

Jerry Mennes, brother of victim Tom Mennes, agrees. The women, he says, waited "so long" to come forward with their story. The families could take the money and build a

memorial to the victims, he said.

But Manny Castro, father of victim Michael Castro, disagrees.

"I think Lockett should get it. She's the one who started this thing. If she died before she talked, what would happen to us?" he said. "She got enough guts to go to the police. I think she should get it."

Oberle acknowledged she played a "vital role" in bringing about the arrests in a 2002 Daily Herald interview, but she said she wasn't "entitled" to any reward money.

At the time, however, she did

say perhaps she would accept "maybe a small percentage" if it were offered, but she added that she would probably give some of it to an organization such as Crime Stoppers.

"I think Anne should get it. Anne did a lot of, you know, she did work. I didn't do any work. She did a sting, you know, got Jim on the phone," she said during the 2002 interview.

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• Daily Herald staff writers Joseph Ryan, Erin Holmes and Tara Malone contributed to this report.

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