

Prosecutor is 'far from a decision' on refileing charges in Amrine case

By SHASHANK BENGALI
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The Cole County prosecutor said Monday he was still considering refileing charges against Joseph Amrine of Kansas City, whose murder conviction recently was tossed out by the Missouri Supreme Court.

Bill Tackett has until June 16 to refile charges, or Amrine will be set free. Tackett said in an interview that in recent weeks his office had been reviewing evidence and meeting with witnesses around the country. He planned to travel today to Colorado to meet with another witness.

"We've done a lot of digging on this, and we are far from a decision," Tackett said.

A Missouri Supreme Court ruling

April 29 overturned Amrine's murder conviction and death sentence and gave Tackett 45 days to refile charges.

Amrine, now 46, was convicted in the 1985 killing of a fellow prison inmate, but three inmates who implicated him in the murder later changed their testimony. Amrine's case earned national attention when he was featured in an anti-death penalty advertising campaign by the Italian clothier Benetton in 2000.

In April, four of seven judges on Missouri's highest court said Amrine had made a "clear and con-



Amrine

vincing showing of actual innocence...."

Tackett said he planned to file a motion with the court as early as this week. That motion could include a request for more time, he said.

Sean O'Brien, a University of Missouri-Kansas City law professor who is representing Amrine, said he would oppose any such motion. He said Tackett has had enough time to track down the three witnesses whose testimony is in question.

"If he hasn't found them yet, it's his own fault," O'Brien said.

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