

Amrine brought back for Cole County hearing

By **STEPHEN FOUTES**
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News Tribune

Joseph Amrine was transported to the Cole County Jail this morning and was scheduled to appear for a bond hearing this afternoon in Cole County Circuit Court.

The transfer comes just two days before Amrine's scheduled release from the Potosi Correctional Center, where he was being held for the Oct. 18, 1985, killing of fellow inmate Gary Barber in a Missouri State Penitentiary recreation room.

Amrine was sentenced to death, but the state Supreme Court ordered Amrine's release from prison "unless the state elects to file new charges against Amrine."

The high court's ruling said Amrine should be freed because the state's three main witnesses recanted their trial testimony.

Cole County Prosecutor Bill Tackett today said he filed an amended charge that adds the names of DNA evidence technicians as witnesses for the state's case.

Earlier this month, Tackett filed a

motion seeking an extension to allow time for DNA testing.

That testing could be used to determine whether blood found on Amrine's clothing can connect him with the killing, Tackett said.

But Tackett said the writ approving today's transfer "effectively nullifies any ruling by the Missouri Supreme Court on my motion for an extension of time for DNA testing, by virtue of having a bond set in Cole County."

Tackett said he intends to go forth with the criminal investigation and the testing of the DNA.

"The blood has to be tested, that's the bottom line," Tackett said. "There's no way to proceed in this case — either to try Amrine again, or to determine that we cannot overcome 17 years and witnesses who have recanted, without knowing whether or not that's Gary Barber's blood."

Sheriff John Hemeyer said his department will treat Amrine as a "high-risk" inmate because he's coming from the

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Potosi inmate Joseph Amrine is taken into the Cole County Jail by Sheriff John Hemeyer.

Stephen Brooks/News Tribune

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Department of Corrections.

"We know from the past those people don't play well with others, as a rule," Hemeyer said.

Hemeyer said Amrine will not be jailed with any young or first time offenders. He will be held alone in a cell toward the back of the jail, Hemeyer said.

Amrine arrived at the jail at about 12:15 p.m. and his bond hearing was scheduled for 1 p.m.