

---

## The Daily Advertiser (1)

---

# Victims shocked as sex change killer granted parole

Nov. 15, 2011, 9:40 p.m.

News  Business



MAIN PICTURE: Geoffrey Websdale is photographed in 2004 for an SBS documentary about music and murder.

IT'S been 22 years since her daughter fell victim to a murderous rampage on a sheep station near Carrathool but Thora Deacon still thinks about it every day.

And, with news yesterday that her daughter's killer will be released from prison some time next month, Mrs Deacon, 60, has described the "enormous shock" she felt when the Advertiser delivered the news.

Karen Deacon of Hay was just 20 years old when she was shot, along with three others, by 21-year-old Geoffrey Websdale on November 7, 1989.

She and 24-year-old Ian Hutchinson of Hay were killed in the shootings, while 27-year-old Daryl Lamb of Deniliquin was left a quadriplegic by his wounds and 19-year-old Debbie Astill of Temora survived two bullet wounds, in her arm and back.

The convicted killer, now known as Michelle Websdale, was yesterday granted parole subject to strict supervision.

The 42-year-old has served just 22 years of a 25-year sentence but has been eligible for parole for the last three years.

Websdale has previously made threats against the families of his victims and Mrs Deacon and her six remaining children are now terrified he will attempt to carry those threats out.

“I’ve always said he still has a lot of feelings of revenge,”

an emotional Mrs Deacon revealed yesterday.

“It’s just devastating and now there’s all this other stuff we have to deal with because he’s said he’ll come back and take revenge on the families.”

Mrs Deacon believes that to free a killer, who was given two life sentences, a 10-year prison sentence and a five-year prison sentence, at the age of 42, is evidence of an imbalance in the system. She fears that Websdale will be looked after by the system while the families of the victims live in fear and suffering.

“We got the death sentence, he got a bed and breakfast,” Mrs Deacon said.

“We always knew this day would come but we didn’t think he’d walk this early.

“The law stinks, it really does.”

Mrs Deacon spent yesterday afternoon on the phone to her children, sharing stories about Karen while she looked over old photographs and newspaper clippings and cried.

All she wants now is to be able to stand at the gates of Silverwater jail in Sydney when her family’s chief tormenter is released.

“I’d love to be there the day he walked, he’s put us through that much pain,” she said.

“I don’t know what I’d do right now – this news has just devastated me.”