



GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Approved: CMT 
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020
Release No.: 20-066

Inmate is Found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity for Jail Killing

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Vu Cong Dao (DOB 03/04/83), of Palmdale, was found to be legally insane at the time he killed his cellmate, Michael Torres, of Oxnard, at the Ventura County Main Jail on October 25, 2018. The decision regarding Dao’s sanity was made by Commissioner Paul Baelly after both parties agreed to a bench trial on the matter. On June 24, 2020, Dao entered a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity to the charge of voluntary manslaughter, thereby admitting he committed the charged act. The case will now move to a commitment hearing. Dao faces up to 11 years of confinement in a state hospital.

Torres was found beaten and strangled to death in his cell, at the Ventura County Main Jail in the City of Ventura on October 25, 2018. Torres’ cellmate, Dao, was later arrested for the killing. Dao was in custody at the time of the killing after being arrested and charged with committing a commercial burglary that took place on October 18, 2018, in Camarillo.

Dao remains in custody without bail pending his commitment to the Department of State Hospitals, which is scheduled for August 18, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. in Department 27 of the Ventura County Superior Court.

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The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office is the public prosecutor for the county’s 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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