



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Transient Man Sentenced for Oxnard Parking Lot Murder

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that James Beam (DOB 01/11/97) was sentenced to 16 years to life in state prison. Beam had previously pled guilty to second-degree murder charges and admitted to the special allegation that he used a knife to kill Sibyl Woodbury.

On April 9, 2020, both Beam and Ms. Woodbury were homeless, living in the same shopping center in Oxnard. That night, Beam followed Ms. Woodbury to a darkened area of the parking lot and stabbed her. Beam, who suffered from severe mental illness, was under the delusion that the victim was a threat to him and his children who lived out of state.

Ms. Woodbury died from a stab wound to the chest about 45 minutes after the attack. Due to the efforts of Oxnard Police Department investigators, Beam was arrested on April 15, 2020, and confessed to the murder.

Following Beam's arrest, a thorough investigation into his background was conducted by the Ventura County Public Defender's Office and our District Attorney Investigators. The investigation revealed extensive mental health issues which developed in his teenage years in Iowa.

"The District Attorney's Office and the victim's family agreed to this sentence in recognition that Mr. Beam's mental health issues merit consideration balanced against the need to protect the safety of the public," Senior Deputy District Attorney Theresa Pollara said. "The victim's brother expressed that, 'he just wants the most humane treatment for the defendant,' taking into account the safety of the community."

Ms. Woodbury was described by her brother as "very sweet, charming, and happy." This view was reflected by other homeless residents she interacted with and who cooperated fully with the police.

Case 2020011240

Defendant Information:

James Beam (DOB 01/11/97)

Transient (Oxnard)

Charges pled to:

- PC 187 – Second-degree murder
Special Allegation
- PC 12022(b)(1) – Use of a knife

