



ERIK NASARENKO
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NEWS RELEASE



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Kevin Ray James Held to Answer for 1997 Bank Robbery Murder of Monica Leech

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Kevin Ray James (DOB 09/23/67), of San Bernardino, has been held to answer for the 1997 murder of Monica Leech. Ventura County Superior Court Judge Derek Malan made the decision on April 10, 2024, after a three-day preliminary hearing where witnesses and evidence were presented.

Monica Leech, a Camarillo mother of four, was employed as a teller at Western Financial Bank, in Thousand Oaks. On April 28, 1997, two men robbed the bank, and one of the men, identified as James, is accused of shooting Ms. Leech in the back of the head. Cash taken from the bank was just over \$11,000.

On March 13, 2023, James was charged with the first-degree murder of Ms. Leech. He was also charged with the two special allegations of murder while engaged in robbery and use of a firearm. He pled not guilty to the charges on April 13, 2023.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Richard Simon, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Homicide Unit, is prosecuting the case, along with Deputy District Attorney Hayley Moyer.

An information arraignment is scheduled for April 24, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 11 of the Ventura County Superior Court. James remains in custody without bail.

Case: 2023005876

Defendant Information:

Kevin Ray James (DOB 09/23/67)
San Bernardino

Charged with:

- PC 187(a) – First-degree murder

Special Allegations:

- PC 190.2(a)(17)(A) – Murder while engaged in robbery
- PC 12022.5(a) – Use of firearm