



Riverside County District Attorney

CRIMINAL CASE UPDATE

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JURORS DECIDE MAN SHOULD BE SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON WITHOUT PAROLE FOR THE 2007 MURDER OF 74-YEAR-OLD HEMET WOMAN

MURRIETA – Today, Sept. 16, 2013, a Riverside County jury decided that a San Jacinto man should be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the murder of a 74-year-old woman during a crime spree at a Hemet apartment complex from August through December 2007.

Kenneth Daniels Jr., DOB: 9-27-86, of San Jacinto, is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 25, 2013, by Judge Angel Bermudez in Dept. S304 at the Southwest Justice Center, 30755 Auld Road, Murrieta.

On Aug. 13, 2013, a same jury found Daniels guilty of first-degree murder and the special circumstance allegations to be true in the murder of a 74-year-old woman in her Hemet apartment. Daniels was convicted of 12 felonies, including one count of murder, for a series of crimes he committed from late August through late December 2007 at the Oak Terrace Senior Apartments on North Santa Fe Street in Hemet. Jurors convicted Daniels of a lesser crime of attempted burglary for trying to break into a woman's apartment on Dec. 28, 2007, the night he was arrested. He had been charged with burglary in that count.

With the jury's first-degree murder verdict and the findings of true for the special circumstance allegations of murder during the commission of a burglary or during the commission of an attempted rape, the trial moved to the penalty phase. After hearing evidence over a couple of weeks, the same jurors deliberated about four full days before deciding that Daniels should not be put to death but be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

The first crime committed by Daniels in this case happened on Aug. 21, 2007, when he broke into the apartment of a 64-year-old woman who he then raped. Daniels returned to the same apartment on Oct. 19, 2007, and again raped the same victim. Then on Dec. 13, 2007, a delivery person noticed that a package she left for a woman at another apartment in the same complex the day before had not been retrieved from her doorway. Apartment complex management staff were notified and checked on the woman who was found badly beaten and murdered inside her apartment. Daniels was convicted of the attempted rape and murder of that victim, who was 74 years old. It is believed the murder was committed on Dec. 11, 2007. On Dec. 28, 2007, Daniels tried to break into a third apartment in the same complex but this time a woman inside was able to call police who arrived and arrested him.

DNA samples collected at the murder scene and at the scene of the two rapes in August were compared and matched to Daniels. Blood from the murder victim was also found on Daniels' shoes which were recovered by authorities during a search warrant.

The case, SWF024245, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Jess Walsh of the DA's Homicide Unit.