Defendant Sentenced for Murder & Arson

Sacramento County
District Attorney's Office
Semper Justitia

DATE: March 17, 2020

CASE: William Thomas (Case #18FE009080)

PROSECUTOR: Deputy District Attorney Aaron Miller, Homicide Unit

The Honorable Michael Bowman sentenced William Thomas to 50 years to life in prison. On February 11, 2020, a jury convicted Thomas of the first-degree murder of Aryanna Doyle and arson. The court also found true the allegation that Thomas suffered a prior 2003 strike conviction for battery causing serious bodily injury.

On March 31, 2018, Ms. Doyle walked to a nearby park where she encountered William Thomas, who was seen earlier lighting small pieces of garbage on fire while at the park. Ms. Doyle left the park with Thomas, who led her to a nearby abandoned trailer home. On the morning of April 1, Easter Sunday, Sacramento Metro Fire was dispatched to extinguish a fire at the abandoned trailer, which was fully engulfed in flames when they arrived. Fire officials located Ms. Doyle's badly burned body inside the trailer. Surveillance footage from a nearby trailer home showed Thomas walking away from the burned trailer within minutes of the fire department being dispatched. Testing by the District Attorney's Crime Lab confirmed the presence of Thomas' semen on swabs taken at autopsy of Ms. Doyle. Testimony from the forensic pathologist confirmed that Ms. Doyle was still alive when the fire began to consume her.

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