



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: August 6, 2021
Re: Peter James Warda
Voluntary Manslaughter Conviction

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Peter James Warda, age 41, of Modesto, was convicted on July 30, 2021 of voluntary manslaughter with enhancements for personally using a firearm and committing the crime while out on bail in a separate case. Deputy District Attorney Aurora Maddocks prosecuted the case for the People.

On February 17, 2019 at approximately 9:00 p.m., Thomas James Hinchman, Jr., age 22, and a friend were leaning against a vehicle smoking a cigarette in a parking lot at Oakdale Road and Sylvan Avenue. Peter Warda, the owner of the vehicle, took offense and angrily told both men to get off his car. Both complied and apologized to Warda who got into his vehicle and began backing out of a parking spot. Instead of leaving, Warda stopped, got out of his car, and began to argue with the two men. The argument escalated into a short physical fight between the three of them. When they finally separated, Warda pulled out a gun and shot Hinchman once in the heart, killing him. Neither Hinchman nor his friend displayed or used any weapons and Warda suffered no serious injuries from the fight. Warda then fled the scene and was found by police four days later hiding in a garage.

Warda was arrested and charged with murder and being a felon in possession of a firearm along with enhancements for using a firearm and committing the crime while out on bail for another crime. Just prior to jury trial, Warda pled guilty to the felon in possession of a firearm count so it was not a charge for the jury.

The case then went to trial before Judge Robert Westbrook on the sole charge of murder with enhancements for personally using a firearm causing death.

After a three-week trial, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury convicted Warda of voluntary manslaughter, a lesser offense to murder, and found true the enhancement he personally used a firearm. In a separate court trial, Judge Westbrook found the enhancement true that Warda was out on bail at the time of the killing.

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Victim impact statements and sentencing are currently set for August 20, 2021, before Judge Westbrook. Warda's total potential prison exposure remains to be determined as he is still facing charges in two other pending felony cases.

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