



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Stanislaus County

832 12th Street, Suite 300
Modesto, CA 95354

Mailing: P. O. Box 442, Modesto, CA 95353
Phone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 525-5545

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney
Carol Shipley
Assistant District Attorney

Chief Deputy District Attorneys

Jerry Begen
Steve Casey
John Goold
Dave Harris

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: June 13, 2008
Re: Jeffrey Rush Price

Contact: Carol Shipley, Assistant DA

Phone: 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Birgit Fladager announced that Jeffrey Rush Price, age 45, of Modesto, was sentenced today to 80 years to life in state prison after being convicted of first degree murder by jury trial on June 13, 2008. Deputy District Attorney Elizabeth Owen prosecuted the case and argued to the Court for the maximum penalty allowed under the law.

Michelle Perkins, age 45, was last seen alive on December 20, 2003. Her bicycle was reported as abandoned property to the Modesto police that same day. The bicycle had been left propped up against a fence near the Economy Inn on McHenry Avenue in Modesto. The next day, December 21, 2003, Jeffrey Price was arrested at Graceada Park in Modesto for a parole violation. Price had the victim's keys, jacket, check cashing card and engagement ring in his possession. Price and the victim had exchanged rings but were never legally wed. During the jury trial, witnesses testified they had seen Price assault Perkins on at least one previous occasion. Just prior to the victim's death, Price and Perkins were seen arguing on the canal by the Economy Inn.

On December 28, 2003, Perkins's decomposing body was found tucked under some tree branches behind the Economy Inn. Modesto Police Detective Ray Coyle collected insect larvae evidence from the body at the crime scene. These larvae were later used to estimate the approximate date of Perkins's death which was determined to be prior to Price's arrest on the parole violation.

Price was arrested and charged with one count of murder. A week long jury trial began October 2, 2007 in Department 7 of the Stanislaus County Superior Court before the Honorable Donald E. Shaver. After deliberating for two days, the jury found Price guilty of Murder in the First Degree. The Judge also found true several prior convictions which qualified as strike priors; thus, Mr. Price was sentenced under the Three Strikes Law.

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