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PRESS RELEASE

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Son Sentenced to Life for Killing Mother

A Chico man, charged with killing his mother with a 10-pound dumbbell last year, appeared in Butte County Superior Court today where he was sentenced to life in prison.

Aaron Neil Patrick Connors, 46, of Chico, previously pleaded no contest last month to a charge of first-degree premeditated and deliberate murder.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the case began on March 5, 2020, when Connors went to visit his estranged mother, Susan Robb, 68, at her home in north Chico during the early morning hours. Connors' mother invited him inside and the two visited with each other for a few hours. When Connors went to leave his mother's home, he went outside to his van, grabbed a 10-pound dumbbell, and went back inside. The unsuspecting Robb was sitting on the couch with her back to her son when he approached her from behind and hit her on the head with the dumbbell. Connors proceeded to strike his mother multiple times on the head with the dumbbell over several minutes causing her death.

Robb's roommate had left for work before the murder and returned home that afternoon to find Robb's body. The roommate called 911. Detectives initially suspected she had been shot in the head due to the extent of trauma.

After the murder, Connors made his way to Gold Country Casino in Oroville where he was later arrested by Butte County Sheriff's deputies. Connors was interviewed at the Butte County Sheriff's Office where he provided a full confession. Connors told detectives he had been thinking about killing his mother for decades but began thinking about it more seriously in the days leading up to the crime.

In his confession, Connors explained he had reached rock bottom just before the murder and had recently become homeless and living out of his van. Connors was at one time a local elementary school teacher. However, over the last several years, he faced a number of personal hardships including divorce, alcoholism, loss of his job, and the failure of another romantic relationship. He said he blamed his mother for his life problems.

At the sentencing hearing today, the assigned prosecutor, Deputy District Attorney Ashley Furry told the judge, "Instead of taking any personal responsibility for where he ended up in life,

Connors blamed the very woman who gave him life.” Furry noted Connors said he considered his elderly mother’s physical condition when selecting what he would use to kill her. He thought a gun would be too messy and he figured he would only have to hit her once with the weight. Connors told detectives that he felt relieved after killing Robb because he knew the State of California would provide him “a safe place to stay, food, and a place to lay his head.” Furry said despite the violent and callous nature of the murder, the evidence confirmed Connors has no known mental health issues and Connors told detectives he was sober when he killed his mother.

Butte County Superior Court Judge Corie Caraway sentenced Connors to the maximum time allowable by statute – 25 years to life in prison. However, Ramsey said, due to recent changes in how the California Department of Corrections calculates expanded credits given to prisoners, Connors could have his first parole hearing in as soon as 16 years.

