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PRESS RELEASE

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Oroville Man Sentenced for 2018 Berry Creek Murder

An Oroville man convicted of a Berry Creek murder by a Butte County jury in December 2020 was sentenced this past Friday to a 20-year to life term in state prison.

Jasson Michael Stepp, 41, was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Michael Deems for the murder of William Chrisman, 68, of Berry Creek. Chrisman was found dead in front of his rural Berry Creek residence on January 4, 2018. Stepp was tried twice for the murder as his first jury failed to come to a unanimous verdict.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Chrisman had been shot eight times and suffered four significant blunt force trauma injuries to his head. Stepp was linked to the murder through DNA evidence, tire tread impressions, and a distant neighbor's video surveillance showing Stepp's vehicle traveling to and from Chrisman's home on the day of the murder. Additionally, Chrisman's personal property was later found dumped in a separate rural location, co-mingled with items belonging to Stepp. Cell phone data showed Stepp had been in contact with Chrisman in the days leading up to the murder and that Stepp had visited the Chrisman home at least twice prior leading up to the murder. Stepp was familiar with the Chrisman property through Chrisman's ex-wife, as he had previously been employed as her handyman the prior summer and had been fired on suspicion of theft then.

Ramsey said Chrisman's daughter addressed Judge Deems at the sentencing hearing along with other family and friends, choosing to memorialize her father as having "a reputation for reliability, trustworthiness and an easy-going disposition. He gave freely, forgave quickly and was generous to all he encountered." The daughter told the judge that, "In sitting through the trial – twice – I listened to the graphic details of dad's death, while contemplating its ripple effects and reflecting upon the . . . immeasurable level of loss... for so many."

Judge Deems sentenced Stepp to 15-years to life in state prison, plus an additional five years for an unrelated identity theft case, which Stepp plead guilty to in January 2021.

