



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



MICHAEL L. RAMSEY
District Attorney

MARK MURPHY
Chief Deputy District Attorney

JUAN DIAZ
Chief Investigator

PRESS RELEASE

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Jury Convicts Oroville Man of 2018 Berry Creek Murder

A Butte County jury this afternoon returned a murder verdict against an Oroville man for a 2018 Berry Creek homicide.

The jury deliberated for approximately a day and a half after a two-week trial before finding Jasson Michael Stepp, 41, of Oroville, guilty of the January 4, 2018 murder of William Chrisman, 68.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Chrisman was found dead in front of his Berry Creek residence. He 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 rural 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 property through Chrisman's ex-wife, as he had previously been employed as her handyman the summer prior.

Ramsey said this was the second trial of Stepp on the murder, as a separate jury had heard the evidence in September but had failed to reach a verdict then. Ramsey noted, "It is significant our office and the Butte County Superior Court was able to serve justice for the family of Chrisman in this case, regardless of the difficulties presented with COVID-19. It is reassuring to know that Butte County residents are both willing and able to continue to do their civic duty even in these uncertain times." Ramsey also credited his prosecutor Jessica Miller for her "dogged determination to see that justice was done" in trying the trial twice.

Ramsey said the Court, attorneys and the jury took COVID-19 precautions; keeping in mind, the significant role criminal jurors play in our criminal justice system. This included appropriate social distancing between all parties, court staff, witnesses, and the jurors themselves.

Stepp remains in custody with no bail. He will appear in two weeks, on December 24, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. to schedule a date for sentencing in this matter. He faces 15 years to life in state prison.

