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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approved by CJZ
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Daniel Gunnarsson Found Guilty of Murder and Mutilation of his 21-Year-Old Romantic Partner

People v. Daniel Gunnarsson: Kern County Superior Court Case BF185572A

(Bakersfield) - District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction today, August 30, 2023. In a case presented by Deputy District Attorney Samantha Allen, a Kern County jury found Daniel Gunnarsson guilty of first-degree murder with the use of a deadly weapon and mutilation of a corpse. Gunnarsson was 20 years old at the time of the murder.

Gunnarsson had been in a dating relationship with the victim, Katie Pham, for the month preceding the murder. The evening before the murder, Gunnarsson displayed animosity towards Pham and expressed what his friends believed to be suicidal behavior. The following morning, Gunnarsson went to his stepfather's residence in Ridgecrest and discussed his failing relationship with Pham. Gunnarsson called Pham and apologized, then requested to pick her up. When she agreed, Gunnarsson picked her up at her apartment and brought her back to his stepfather's residence.

Upon returning to that residence, Gunnarsson led Pham into the RV garage. Shortly thereafter, painters at the residence heard a female screaming, followed by shuffling of items. Approximately an hour later, the painters opened the door to the RV garage to proceed with their work. Upon opening the door of the RV garage, Gunnarsson was found covered in blood and Pham was deceased laying face down on a mattress topper. The victim's clothing was partially removed, exposing her chest and mid-section. The painters immediately requested help from the owner of the home and 911 was called. Evidence showed that Gunnarsson put on gloves which were found at the scene, then used a 24-inch-long ice ax as a weapon, striking Pham upwards of ten times in the head, neck and face. After Pham was deceased, Gunnarsson repositioned Pham and proceeded to touch her remains in a sexual manner.

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "This conduct was despicable, even to prosecutors well versed in homicide crimes. Inexplicable acts of violence must be met with appropriate penalty, including a life sentence, to provide justice and promote public safety."

Sentencing is set for October 25, 2023, before Superior Court Judge Brian McNamara. Gunnarsson faces a sentence of up to 25 to Life, plus 4 years.

Daniel Gunnarsson:



Victim, Katie Pham:

