



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF KERN

CIVIC CENTER JUSTICE BUILDING
1215 TRUXTUN AVENUE
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301
(661) 868-2340, FAX: (661) 868-2700

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

ANDREA S. KOHLER
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

February 21, 2024
MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:
SDDA David McKillop
(661) 868-2330

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #24-28

Three Wasco Inmates Found Guilty of Fatal Beating
People v. Kolehmainen, Douglas, & Mitchell: Kern County Superior Court Case BF192903ABC

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a conviction. On February 15, 2024, a Kern County jury found Benjamin Kolehmainen (age 30), Tyler Douglas (age 25), and Joshua Mitchell (age 45) guilty of assault by an inmate with force likely to cause great bodily injury. In addition, Kolehmainen and Douglas were found guilty of involuntary manslaughter. The jury also found it to be true that Kolehmainen and Douglas caused great bodily injury to the victim. All three inmates were acquitted of second-degree murder charges.

On February 20, 2024, the court found it to be true aggravating factors relating to the defendants and the crime. Douglas has two prior strike convictions, and Mitchell has one prior strike conviction.

On March 7, 2022, victim Michael Iverson had been at Wasco State Prison for two weeks and was moved into a dormitory housing unit. The dormitory housed over 100 inmates who were assigned to a bunk but not a cell. After being in the dormitory for less than two hours, the three inmates attacked Iverson simultaneously. Correctional Officers quickly broke up the fight, but Iverson suffered severe brain and neck injuries. A Kern County Pathologist testified that this is one of the worst cases of blunt force trauma he has seen. The case of death was determined as blunt force trauma to the head and neck and the manner of death was homicide.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction; “While I am disappointed with this verdict, I respect the jurors’ decision. A 3-on-1 beatdown in prison resulting in death of an inmate is not uncommon and this type of brutality perpetrated by those with prior acts of violence should be severely punished.”

Sentencing is set on February 20, 2024, before the Honorable Judge John Oglesby in Department 3 of the Kern County Superior Court. Douglas faces up to 25 years to life in prison, Mitchell faces up to 12 years in prison, and Kolehmainen faces up to 11 years in prison.

Benjamin Kolehmainen



Tyler Douglas



Joshua Mitchell

