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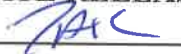
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MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approved by 

Re: Michael Beardsley: Murder Conviction: BF 172966 A

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that on March 7, 2019, a Kern County Jury returned a guilty verdict for First Degree Murder in the case against Michael Beardsley in case BF 172966 A. Beardsley, an inmate at Wasco State Prison, was convicted of the First Degree Murder of his cellmate, James Morris.

On February 7, 2017, at around 3:05pm, a corrections officer heard inmates yelling "man down" in the area of cell 112. Responding officers saw the two assigned inmates inside cell 112; Inmate Michael Beardsley was standing in the cell near the door, and Inmate Jason Morris was nonresponsive, face down in a puddle of blood. In addition to the pool of blood in the cell, there was blood splatter in the cell, as well as reddened water in the toilet/sink area. Responding staff escorted Beardsley out of the cell, while responding medical personnel attempted lifesaving measures on Inmate Morris, who remained nonresponsive. Medical staff did chest compressions right outside the cell, and continued lifesaving measures at the Treatment and Triage Area (TTA). During the course of medical intervention, Morris never had a pulse or a heartbeat, and did not breathe. Morris's severe injuries to his body (particularly his head and face) were immediately apparent.

During the course of medical intervention, medical staff removed a noose or ligature from Morris's neck. The only apparent injury to the defendant was a swollen right hand. Medical intervention ended at around 3:25pm.

The cause of death was determined to be strangulation by ligature, although there was also significant blunt force trauma to the head, as well as multiple rib fractures. After Morris died the mother of the Beardsley's daughter received multiple handwritten letters from Beardsley in which the Beardsley made admissions about killing his cellmate. In one letter, Beardsley wrote, "I'm in the SHU in Corcoran right now for killing my celly." In another letter, Beardsley wrote, "I just killed a man," and in another letter, Beardsley wrote, "I killed my celly because he washed his hands, LOL, crazy right." In another letter, when discussing being in special confinement, Beardsley wrote, "It's like they are mad at me for killing

that fool at their front door.”

Representatives of the District Attorney met with the Beardsley on June 29, 2018. During the course of that contact, the Beardsley told representatives of the DA’s office that he sent the DA’s office a demand for trial because, “I have been waiting for trial for a year and a half on a murder that I committed in the institution.”

On January 29, 2019, in an unrelated incident, when told that he would be sent back to his cell, Beardsley spontaneously stated to CDCR officers something to the effect of, “I’m not going back. You send me back and you’ll have another dead body...I’ve already killed one, and I’ll kill anyone else, CDC is playing games and I don’t give a shit.”

The jury returned a guilty verdict for first degree murder after one hour of deliberation. The case was prosecuted by DDA Michael Caves and DDA Hunter Starr.

Beardsley has 3 prior “strike” offenses, including two for felony gang participation, and one for assault with a deadly weapon. Sentencing is scheduled for April 4, 2019 in Department 3. Beardsley faces an expected sentence of more than 50 years to life.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction; “Our expanded Homicide Unit continues to produce results in fighting to ensure that the most violent, career criminals remain behind bars, where they belong.”