



DenverDA

Mitchell R. Morrissey, District Attorney - Second Judicial District
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 801, Denver, CO 80202

Bus. Phone: 720-913-9000
Fax: 720-913-9035

NEWS RELEASE

December 17, 2014

Contact: Lynn Kimbrough, 720-913-9025

GUILTY VERDICT IN COLD CASE FROM '79

A man accused in the 1979 murder of a young woman found beaten in the sanctuary of a Denver church has been found guilty in connection with the case today by a Denver jury.

James Scott (dob: 07-19-61) was convicted of two counts of first-degree felony murder (F1), and one count of second-degree murder (F2) in the death of 19-year-old Martha Guzman.

On October 25, 1979, Guzman was alone in a church at 3401 Bryant preparing for an evening service when she was attacked. The pastor and his family found her and called for help. She was taken to what is now Denver Health Medical Center and died several days later from her injuries.

In 2006, Scott was extradited to Denver from New York, in connection with a 1995 sexual assault and kidnapping case. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 40 years in prison on that case. Detectives identified Scott as a suspect in Guzman's murder during the course of the sexual assault case, and he was charged in her murder. However, a legal restriction prevented the murder case from going forward at that time since Scott had been brought to Colorado for the sole purpose of facing the charges in the 1995 case. Scott was returned to New York to serve a lengthy prison sentence for a sexual assault there and the Denver murder charge was dismissed so that it could be re-filed, which it was last fall.

Scott went to immediate sentencing in Denver District Court this afternoon, facing a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole. The case was prosecuted by Denver Chief Deputy DA Dawn Weber and Chief Deputy DA Julie Hamel.

-30-