



NEWS RELEASE

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Matthew Burnett Sentenced to 38 years in Prison

Matthew Patrick Burnett (DOB 07/29/81) was sentenced to 38 years in prison Friday in Broomfield County District Court for the murder of James Clifford Fernandez, 34, and possession of child pornography.

Burnett pleaded guilty to second-degree murder (F2) and sexual exploitation of a child (F4) in a separate case involving more than 2700 images and 129 videos of child pornography found on Burnett's computer when police searched his home after Fernandez was killed.

On August 17, Broomfield police responded to a report of a man lying in the street in the 2500 block of 134th Circle and identified the man as Fernandez, of Westminster, who had spent the evening with Burnett and Carissa Koch at 2551 W. 134th Circle. Burnett initially was charged with first-degree murder after deliberation (F1). He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and sexual exploitation of a child (F4).

Chief Deputy District Attorney Patrick Costigan said Burnett strangled Fernandez and then dragged his body into the street. "This was not accidental," Costigan said. "The coroner said it would have taken four minutes to strangle him to death."

Costigan told the court that Burnett has been "in a perpetual state of denial" about his crimes and has not taken responsibility for what he did. Costigan said Burnett first blamed the murder on jealousy and then said he was so drunk that he blacked out. Burnett also claimed he had no idea how the thousands of images of child pornography wound up on his computer, telling police that the images "just snuck in there somehow." Costigan said the child pornography found on his computer is even more disturbing because his wife operated a daycare center at the home.

Costigan asked for a maximum sentence of 54 years – 48 years for second-degree murder and 6 years for child exploitation. Broomfield County District Judge Francis Wasserman sentenced him to 32 years for second-degree murder and 6 years for child exploitation.

Wasserman questioned Burnett's claim that he blacked out and didn't remember how or why he killed his friend. He also said thousands of children were victims of his sexual exploitation crime because if it were not for individuals like him there would be no market for such images.

Koch was charged with accessory to murder after the fact (F4) and destruction of physical evidence (F6). She pleaded guilty to destruction of physical evidence and is set for sentencing June 19 in Division A of Broomfield County District Court.