



NEWS RELEASE

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Man Sentenced to Life in Prison for Murder of Woman at Adams County Motel

Emiliano Damacio Urioste (DOB 04/29/85) was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole Thursday in the beating death of a disabled woman found dead in an Adams County motel last June.

"We are very sorry for the tragic loss of this young woman, who was brutally murdered by the defendant in this case," said District Attorney Dave Young. "We hope this verdict gives her family a sense of justice. The defendant will be spending the rest of his life behind bars."

Abigail Cozad, 31, of Thornton, was found beaten and strangled to death at the Primrose Motel at 5450 Federal Boulevard in unincorporated Adams County on June 1. Her body had been stuffed inside a sofa in the motel room.

Cozad had gone to the motel on May 31 with Urioste and Teresa Dean (DOB 03/19/87). Evidence in the eight-day trial showed that Cozad recently had become involved with Urioste, who had free use of her credit cards and cash. Once a high school honor student and competitive swimmer, Cozad suffered a traumatic brain injury from an automobile accident in 1999 that left her physically and cognitively impaired.

On May 30, the three and another man had driven around in Cozad's car, going to bars, before Urioste became enraged and began slapping Cozad, slamming her face into the dashboard of the car and trying to push her out of the moving vehicle. Dean testified that Urioste wrapped Cozad in plastic in a field and put in the trunk of the car before the three went to the motel room about 9 a.m. on May 31. There, Cozad was beaten and strangled to death, her body stuffed into the back of a sofa.

The evidence included receipts charged on Cozad's credit card after her death for cleaning supplies, gloves and lighter fluid. Chief Deputy District Attorney David Blackett told the jury that Urioste planned to set the sofa and motel room on fire but his plan was foiled when he and returned to the motel and found police were there.

"Abby Cozad was beaten, battered and murdered," Blackett said during closing arguments. "They laid waste to her in that room. This was a teenaged girl trapped in the disabled, weakened body of an adult, a lonely young woman who used her money in an attempt to get friends. The defendant took her money, her dignity and her life. Hold him responsible."

Urioste was convicted of first-degree murder after deliberation, first-degree felony murder, robbery, and misdemeanor counts of third-degree assault, reckless endangerment and aggravated motor vehicle theft. In addition to the mandatory life prison term without parole for first-degree murder, Adams County Judge Craig Welling Jr., sentenced Urioste to six years in prison for robbery (F4).

“This family has had to endure more tragedy and heartbreak than any family should have to,” Welling said. “This is a tragic and senseless murder. There will always remain a hole in this family. There are no winners here, but there is justice. “

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