



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Thornton Man Convicted and Sentenced to Life in Prison for Murder of his Wife**

Stefan Stoian (DOB 09/06/67) was convicted of first-degree murder after deliberation and sentenced to life in prison without parole Thursday in the shooting death of his wife, Maria Stoian, last year at their Thornton home.

The Adams County District Court jury deliberated less than three hours before reaching its verdict.

“This was a tragic case,” said District Attorney Dave Young. “The defendant calculated his plan and shot his wife in the back of her head while she slept. Nothing we do here can bring back Maria to those who loved her. We hope that this verdict gives the family a sense of justice and that they can take some measure of comfort from that.”

Thornton police officers found Maria Stoian, 45, dead of a gunshot wound to the head at the family home in the 7500 block of East 121st Place in Thornton on June 3, 2015. The couple’s 16-year-old daughter called 911 after finding her mother dead in bed, a blood-soaked pillow covering her head.

Evidence in the trial, which began this week in Adams County District Court, showed that the couple’s relationship had been deteriorating and Maria Stoian had begun an affair. In the days before the murder, Stefan Stoian had transferred \$5,000 of the couple’s money into a savings account, prompting Maria Stoian, who was concerned that he was going to take all of their money, to transfer \$222,000 from their account into a new personal account in her name.

Both of them worked for the U.S. Postal Service, where Maria Stoian worked the night shift and her husband worked days. On June 3, 2015, Stefan Stoian called in sick. After removing items including \$40,000 in cash from a bank safety deposit box, he returned home and shot his wife in the back of the head as she slept, prosecutors said.

Stoian gave various stories to police, claiming that he confronted his wife to get the money back and she was accidentally shot during the confrontation. However, forensic pathologist Dr. Michael Arnall testified that Maria Stoian died of a contact gunshot wound to the back of her head. He said the bullet exited out of her forehead.

After the shooting, Stefan Stoian fled and was arrested June 5, 2015 in Nevada, where he checked into a motel using a fake name and driver's license.

During closing arguments, Senior Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Prince told the jury that Stoian had written in January 2014 about a dream he had of killing his wife. "Stefan Stoian's dream became a reality on June 3, 2015 when he executed his wife," she said. "This is a case of intentional first-degree murder after deliberation. This was no accident. Stefan Stoian executed his wife."

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