




GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Approved: CMT 
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020
Release No.: 20-051

Man Found Guilty of First-Degree Murder for Killing 81-Year-Old Woman in 1980 Cold Case

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Lenard Chester (DOB 04-22-61), of Oxnard, was found guilty by a jury of the first-degree murder of Leah Bullis, aged 81, with the special circumstances that the murder was committed while in the commission of rape and burglary.

Chester severely beat and raped Ms. Bullis in her home in Oxnard between the evening of November 30, and the morning of December 1, 1980. Ms. Bullis was found in her bedroom late that morning by neighbors and later died at the hospital. In 2018, Chester was identified using forensic DNA analysis. This case was investigated by the Oxnard Police Department.

Chester will be sentenced on July 20, 2020, at 8:30 a.m., in courtroom 48 of the Ventura County Superior Court. Chester faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Chester is being held in the Ventura County jail with no bail pending the sentencing hearing.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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