



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Approved: SW
Date: March 17, 2025
Release No.: 25-034

Jury Finds Man Guilty of Ordering 2004 Moorpark Killing

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Antoine Nehme (DOB 07/22/51), of Victorville, has been convicted by a jury of orchestrating the 2004 murder of Dennis Wood, a Moorpark resident found dead in his home. The jury also found true the special allegation that Nehme ordered the killing for financial gain. Additionally, Judge Paul Baelly found all charged aggravating factors were true, including that the crime involved great violence and was carried out with planning, sophistication, or professionalism.

On April 16, 2004, Ventura County Sheriff's Office deputies conducted a welfare check at Wood's Moorpark home. They discovered his body lying in the doorway, with a large pool of blood near his head. An autopsy confirmed he had been shot twice in the head and once in the chest. The case went cold for several years.

Investigators later uncovered a financial motive. Wood, who owned a prepaid phone card business, had given Nehme \$28,700 in cash for an unknown business venture. At the time, Nehme owned a gas station in Ojai where he had purchased prepaid phone cards from Wood. Rather than repay his debt, Nehme arranged for Wood to be killed to wipe out what he owed.

A break in the case came in February 2010, when a suspect in an unrelated Los Angeles murder case revealed that his co-defendant, Alex Bracamonte, had killed Wood on Nehme's orders. Bracamonte, who worked for Nehme at the Ojai gas station, later confessed to the Wood murder during an August 23, 2023, interview with deputies. He provided details only the killer would know.

Already serving time for a 2006 Los Angeles murder, Bracamonte was charged with Wood's killing and pled guilty on May 8, 2024. He testified against Nehme during trial and is scheduled to be sentenced for Wood's murder on April 30, 2025.

Senior Deputy District Attorney John Barrick, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Major Crimes Homicides Unit, prosecuted the case.

"I am deeply grateful to the jury for convicting the defendant and to the Ventura County Sheriff's detectives who never gave up on this case," Mr. Barrick said. "Thanks to their tireless efforts—especially lead detectives Gerardo Cruz and Erik Hernandez—we secured the evidence needed to prove this case beyond a reasonable doubt. After two decades, they made justice possible for Dennis Wood's family."

Nehme is scheduled to be sentenced on May 20, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 26 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He remains in custody without bail and faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Case: 2024012877

Defendant Information:

Antoine Nehme (DOB 07/22/51)
Victorville

Charges convicted of:

- PC 187(a) – Murder
- PC 182(a)(1) – Conspiracy to commit a crime
- PC 653f(b) – Solicitation of murder

Special Allegations Found True:

- PC 190.2(a)(1) – Murder for financial gain
- CRC 4.421(a)(1) – The crime involved great violence
- CRC 4.421(a)(3) – Victim was vulnerable
- CRC 4.421(a)(4) – The defendant induced another to participate
- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning, sophistication, or professionalism
- CRC 4.421(a)(11) – The defendant took advantage of a position of trust

