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Contact: James Hallinan

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(505) 660-2216

Attorney General Secures Hnulik Murder Conviction

Carlsbad, NM - The Office of Attorney General Hector Balderas has secured a second degree murder conviction in the shooting death of Brandy Capps. Today, a Carlsbad jury found Dallas Hnulik guilty of murdering Ms. Capps, age 32, who was found dead in her vehicle five years ago.

“Justice was served today, and we hope that this conviction can bring some closure to the family of Brandy Capps,” Attorney General Hector Balderas said. “My office will continue to work with local law enforcement across New Mexico to attack violent crime and make New Mexico safer for our families.”

Hnulik was convicted after the jury deliberated for only two hours and now faces 16 years of incarceration for murdering Ms. Capps, who suffered a gunshot wound to the face at a range of approximately four inches.

Fifth Judicial District Judge Lisa Riley allowed instructions for second degree murder and both theories of manslaughter, along with a firearm enhancement. The jury was informed, based on testimony of firearms experts Lucien Haag and Steve Guerra, that the gun was discharged due to an intentional trigger pull, before returning the second degree murder verdict. The experts testified that Hnulik’s firearm was in working order and had to have been cocked and the trigger pulled for the gun to discharge in this case.

In the course of the investigation and trial, Hnulik gave multiple explanations of the circumstances of the shooting, claiming the shooting was accidental while confessing at least twice to being in an argument with the victim just prior to her murder and stating to a family friend that he intentionally shot Ms. Capps. In closing statements, prosecutors argued that the killing was intentional based on the expert testimony that the discharge of the weapon was not accidental and facts surrounding the relationship between Hnulik and Ms. Capps.

See attached for a photo of Dallas Hnulik.

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