



HAWTHORNE POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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Suitable For Public Dissemination

Murder Conviction

On Friday, September 7, 2007, Hawthorne Police officers responded with L.A. County Fire Department personnel on a call of a baby not breathing. Upon arrival, police officers found a 2-year-old female, lying on the floor, not breathing and without a pulse. Officers immediately began CPR until paramedics arrived. The 2 year female was immediately transported to Centinela Hospital.

At Centinela Hospital, doctors succeeded in resuscitating the girl. Doctors determined she had to immediately be transferred to another hospital due to the severity of the injuries she sustained. Doctors at the second hospital performed emergency surgery to control some of the girl's internal bleeding. Sadly, shortly after the surgery, the girl succumbed to her injuries.

After a lengthy investigation, the girl's stepfather, James Vernon Ward IV, was arrested and charged with her murder.

After three weeks of trial, the jurors convened to deliberate on October 15, 2010. After approximately one hour of deliberation, the jury in the homicide trial found James Vernon Ward IV guilty on three counts:

PC 187(a) Murder

PC 273ab Child abuse resulting in death

PC 273a(a) Child abuse

The jury also found the defendant to be guilty of first-degree murder with a special allegation of PC 289 (forced sexual penetration during the commission of murder). This allegation holds a potential prison term of life without the possibility of parole.

Sentencing has been set for December, 2010.

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