

Bristol County District Attorney's Office
C. Samuel Sutter
District Attorney

Press Release
February 2, 2009

Bristol County District Attorney Sam Sutter announced that Derek Woollam was convicted of the First Degree Murder of John Oliveira Jr. today in Taunton Superior Court.

Mr. Woollam was convicted by a jury of his peers after two hours of deliberations. Woollam was immediately sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Woollam, 26, of 330 Nickel Ave., Swansea and 2544 County St., Somerset, was charged with shooting Oliveira several times in July of 2006 at Oliveira's Swansea home on GAR Highway.

First Assistant District Attorney William McCauley, who heads up the office's Unsolved Homicide Unit and oversees all homicide investigations in Bristol County, prosecuted the case for District Attorney Sutter's office.

District Attorney Sutter campaigned in 2006 on a pledge to take a dramatically new approach to the investigations of the approximately 75 Bristol County unsolved homicides between 1991 and 2006. Within three months of being sworn in as District Attorney, Sutter's office was bringing charges against Mr. Woollam for the murder of Mr. Oliveira.

District Attorney Sutter, who often calls unsolved homicides an "open wound" for families and communities, has made solving "cold cases" a priority at the District Attorney's Office.

Through the first two years of his administration, District Attorney Sutter's office has brought new murder charges in five previously unsolved homicide cases his office inherited.

District Attorney Sutter, “To begin with, I am very happy for Mr. Oliveira’s family – his mother and father, sisters and brothers, and son. The family attended every single day of the trial, showing their devotion to Mr. Oliveira. To see them receive a measure of justice for the murder of their family member is very gratifying. I also want to thank the entire prosecution team ----- Swansea Police Detectives, State Police Detectives, and those members of my office ---- First Assistant Bill McCauley, Superior Court Prosecutor Marni Peck, and Victim/Witness Advocate David Reback ---- for their tireless and successful efforts to obtain a conviction in this case. Mr. McCauley’s advocacy was outstanding. I also want to take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of this office to continuing our investigations in all of the unsolved homicides between 1991 and 2006, as well as some of those during the 1980’s. We will not rest until we have done everything we can to determine who is responsible for those murders and to bring them to justice.”

Mr. Woollam’s case was the first of the five previously unsolved homicide cases to proceed to trial.

Those cases include:

--- Robert Roy was charged in October of 2007 with the March 1986 slaying of his estranged wife Marni Larkin-Roy in Dartmouth.

--- Fagbemi Miranda was charged in March of 2008 with the October 2005 shooting murder of Christopher Barros in New Bedford.

---Jermaine Holley was charged in June of 2007 with the April 2005 stabbing murder of Suzy Goulart in Fall River.

--- Shawn M. Hunt and John Michael Pittman were indicted in January of 2009 with the November 2003 drive-by shooting murder of Alberto “Tito” Gonzalez. Cory Hubbard was also indicted in January of 2009 with being an accessory after the fact to Mr. Gonzalez’s murder.

Anyone with information regarding any unsolved homicide is urged to call the district attorney’s unsolved homicide tip line at 1-866-SOLVE-07.

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