



OFFICE OF THE
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ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TODD SPITZER

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PRESS RELEASE

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**Convicted Pedophile Sentenced to Life in Prison
without the Possibility of Parole After Pleading Guilty to Kidnapping,
Raping and Murdering Four Young Women while on GPS Monitoring
Co-defendant was sentenced to death in 2017**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A convicted pedophile was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole today after pleading guilty to the special circumstances murders of four young women after kidnapping and raping them while on GPS monitoring. His co-defendant, who is also a convicted pedophile on GPS monitoring during the murders, was sentenced to death in 2017.

The two men were identified as suspects in the murder spree after DNA and GPS monitoring data tied them to the body of a 20-year-old woman was discovered on a conveyor belt of an Anaheim recycling facility in March 2014. The bodies of the other victims have never been recovered.

Franc Cano, 36, of Anaheim, was indicted by a grand jury on October 2, 2014 on four felony counts of special circumstances murder, four felony counts of forcible rape, and special circumstances of murder during the commission of rape, multiple murders, lying in wait, and kidnapping.

Cano had faced the death penalty, but Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer conducted a thorough review of the case, consulted with the victims' families and received a mitigation presentation from the defense. After this process, with the unanimous support of the special circumstances committee and the lead Anaheim detective Julissa Trapp, he decided life in prison without the possibility of parole was the appropriate punishment for Cano. Cano was informed of this decision and indicated that he wanted to plead guilty as charged.

"There are some people in this world whom society cannot allow to roam this earth among the rest of us," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "The acts they have committed are so heinous that they do not deserve to take another breath. Franc Cano and Steven Gordon are the things of nightmares. In this case pursuing

the death penalty was not an appropriate punishment based on the entire reassessment of the case. I am thankful I met with each victim and they concur with my decision. After today these mothers will no longer have to wonder about the fate of the monster who stole their daughters away.”

Steven Dean Gordon, 53, of Anaheim, was indicted by a grand jury on Oct. 2, 2014. He was found guilty by a jury on Dec. 15, 2016, of four felony counts of special circumstances murder with sentencing enhancements for kidnapping and multiple murders. He was sentenced to the death penalty on February 3, 2017.

Their victims included:

Jarrae Nykkole Estepp, 21

Kianna Jackson, 20

Josephine Vargas, 34

Martha Anaya, 28

Despite being legally prohibited from being associated with each other due to their registered sex offender status, Cano and Gordon were transients who camped in the back of a paint and body shop in Anaheim.

While on GPS monitoring, Cano and Gordon patrolled the streets of Anaheim and Santa Ana looking for young sex workers to abduct.

On Oct. 6, 2013, Gordon and Cano kidnapped 20-year-old Kianna Jackson from Santa Ana and took her to the paint and body shop in Anaheim where they were living and raped and murdered her.

On Oct. 24, 2013, Gordon and Cano kidnapped 34-year-old Josephine Vargas from Santa Ana and took her to the same paint and body shop in Anaheim, where they raped and murdered her.

On Nov. 12, 2013, Gordon and Cano kidnapped 28-year-old Martha Anaya from Santa Ana and took her to the same paint and body shop in Anaheim, where they raped and murdered her.

On March 13, 2014, Gordon and Cano kidnapped 21-year-old Jarrae Nykkole Estepp from west Anaheim and took her to the same paint and body shop in Anaheim, where they raped and murdered her.

On March 14, 2014, the Anaheim Police Department received a call about a body found on a conveyor belt at a recycling plant in east Anaheim. During the investigation, detectives identified the body as that of Estepp and linked Cano to the victim by running a sex offender GPS check. DNA from Cano and Gordon was found on Estepp’s body.

Gordon was later identified as a co-defendant in all four murders through cell phone and GPS technology.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Walker of the Homicide Unit prosecuted this case.

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