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DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

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PRESS RELEASE

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Greg Risling
Public Information and Affairs Administrator
Office: 714-347-8435, Cell: 657-303-5239
media@ocdapa.org

Kimberly Edds
Director of Public Affairs
Office: 714-347-8405, Cell: 714-504-1917
media@ocdapa.org

Anaheim Man Found Guilty of Murdering Ex-Girlfriend While Awaiting Domestic Violence Trial for Beating Her, Throwing Her Over a Patio Fence Four Months Earlier

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 37-year-old man was found guilty today of beating and strangling his 24-year-old ex-girlfriend to death at his Anaheim apartment on St. Patrick's Day 2023 while awaiting trial for beating and throwing the woman over a patio fence in a violent attack just four months earlier.

A jury convicted Aaron Stevan Romo, 37, of Anaheim, of one felony count of first-degree murder for killing his girlfriend, 24-year-old Mirelle Mateus, in 2023. He was also convicted of one felony count of domestic battery with corporal injury, and one felony count of false imprisonment by menace, violence, fraud or deceit in connection with a December 5, 2022 attack on Mateus.

Romo faces a maximum sentence of life in state prison with the possibility of parole. Sentencing is scheduled for June 24, 2024 in Department C36 of the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana.

On March 17, 2023, Romo called his ex-girlfriend Mirelle Mateus to pick him up after he was badly injured in a fight outside of a bar in the city of Orange. Mateus, who had a restraining order against Romo which was set to expire in 2025, picked him up and took him to the Anaheim apartment the couple once shared.

The next day, Mateus' mother became concerned when she noticed her daughter didn't return home and she was unable to reach her on her cell phone. Mateus' mother went to Romo's apartment and found the apartment's door open and Mateus dead in the bathroom. She had been badly beaten and strangled to death.

Romo was later arrested at the home of his current girlfriend in Riverside where he unsuccessfully attempted suicide several times.

At the time of the Mateus' murder, Romo was awaiting trial on domestic violence charges stemming from an incident on December 5, 2022, for hitting her and throwing her over a patio fence. He was released on bond and was ordered to have no contact with Mateus.

"The cycle of domestic violence has tragically claimed the life of another victim who could not escape the deadly hands of her abuser," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "A mother's last memory of her daughter should not be finding her lifeless body on the floor where she spent the last moments of her life struggling to get away from the man who had repeatedly abused her. He is a master manipulator who repeatedly lured his victim back in only to ruthlessly beat and strangle her until she took her last breath."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Mark Birney of the Homicide Unit is prosecuting this case.

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