

# DISTRICT ATTORNEY

DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
Larry D. Morse II

CHIEF DEPUTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
David W. Moranda



ASSISTANT  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
Joseph M. Tresidder

CHIEF DEPUTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
Harold L. Nutt

2222 "M" STREET, MERCED, CA 95340  
TELEPHONE (AREA CODE 209) 385-7381  
FAX (209) 725-3563

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### GUILTY PLEA ENTERED IN MURDER CASE

Atwater resident Beau Michael Ordonez, 28, pled guilty today in Merced Superior Court to the June 6, 2007 murder of Winton resident Terrance Tate. Ordonez also pled guilty to committing the murder of Tate while personally armed with a deadly weapon, and to second degree robbery. Ordonez's co-defendant, Charles Milby Hukill previously pled to manslaughter and agreed to testify against Ordonez at trial. Ordonez faces a minimum sentence of 26 years to life when he is sentenced on February 2, 2009.

Evidence gathered by the Merced County Sheriff's Department established that Hukill and Ordonez agreed to give Tate, who was intoxicated, a ride home from the Outpost bar in Winton late on the night of June 5, 2007. Hukill was the driver, Tate sat in the front passenger seat, and Ordonez sat behind Tate in the back passenger seat. During the ride home, Ordonez began assaulting Tate, hitting him around the face with his fists. Ordonez then took off his shoe laces and used them to strangle Tate.

The Coroner's report stated that the cause of death of Tate was, "combined ligature and manual strangulation." The autopsy report also noted that Tate suffered multiple blunt force injuries and there were no defensive type wounds on his hands or arms.

After strangling Tate, Ordonez directed Hukill to drive the victim's body to his family's cabin in Twain Harte. There Ordonez and Hukill washed up and Ordonez burned the bloody clothes he was wearing in the cabin fireplace. The police later executed a search warrant and recovered the ashes of Ordonez' clothing from the cabin fireplace. Ordonez then directed Hukill to drive the victim's body to a remote mountain location where they dumped the body into a deep ravine off California Highway 108 near Long Barn.

At some point Ordonez removed Tate's wallet and placed it in his own jacket. The wallet was later recovered by the police from Ordonez's jacket hanging in a closet at the Twain Harte cabin. Eighty-six dollars had been removed from the wallet and a part of that money was used to buy breakfast at a Burger King.

Ordonez and Hukill arrived back in Winton around 7 a.m. on June 6, 2007. Shortly, thereafter Hukill reported the murder to the Merced County Sheriff's Office. The police then had Hukill make a tape recorded phone call to Ordonez, where Ordonez agreed to help clean the blood out of Hukill's car. The police were able to locate Tate's body in the mountains based partly on Hukill's description of where they had dumped him.

Following his arrest, Ordonez initially claimed had not been with Tate. However, Ordonez eventually confessed to the murder when confronted with the taped phone call and Hukill's recorded statement. Ordonez said he killed Tate because he believed Mr. Tate was reaching for a weapon when he began his assault on him.

Deputy District Attorney David Sandhaus, who prosecuted the case said "I am pleased with the outcome because it spares family members the ordeal and uncertainty of trial, and I doubt Mr. Ordonez will ever be released from prison. I am also aware that there is not much our office can do to relieve the suffering of surviving family members, but I hope in time they will have a sense that justice was done in this matter."