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Man Who Murdered, Mutilated Teen in 1987 Sentenced to Life in Prison

Russell Taylor Killed 15-year-old and Dumped the Boy in Flood Channel

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that 56-year-old Russell Taylor, who is in prison for a third-strike narcotics case, has now been sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for torturing and murdering 15-year-old Dewan Emerson in 1987.

The boy went missing one night in 1987 after answering a knock at the door of the apartment he shared with family members. His mutilated body was found the following morning in a flood channel by an engineer. He had been strangled to death.

“Three decades after this heinous crime, the defendant is being held responsible for his actions,” District Attorney Summer Stephan said. “The dedicated prosecutors in our Cold Case Homicide Unit and their law enforcement counterparts don’t give up and this is a great example of the outstanding work they do to bring a measure of closure to victims’ loved ones.”

Two months after the Emerson murder, Taylor was arrested and convicted for two attempted murders. He was sentenced to a prison term of 15-year and four months. After serving his sentence, he was released and later re-arrested on a drug offense.

Taylor pleaded guilty to first-degree murder with the special circumstance of torture in the commission of the murder in the 1987 case on July 17. He agreed to a stipulated life without the possibility of parole sentence.

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