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Man Who Stabbed Girlfriend to Death the Day After Christmas, Sentenced to Prison

42-Year-Old Victim Was Unhoused and Disabled

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that a 31-year-old man, who stabbed his girlfriend to death in San Marcos in December 2023, has been sentenced to 26 years-to-life in prison. In February, a jury found Ziyah Patterson guilty of first-degree murder. The defendant brutally stabbed 42-year-old Angela Lanway in the ear and neck, severing an artery and breaking a bone in her spine.

“Too often circumstances surrounding domestic violence are made even more dangerous when people are living in vulnerable conditions like being homeless, but our prosecutor and law enforcement believed the victim's life mattered and deserved justice,” DA Stephan said. “This was a devastating and senseless loss of life and Angela’s attacker is being held accountable for his actions.”

The defendant and the victim were homeless and living behind a business in San Marcos at the time of the incident. Before the attack, Patterson became upset when Lanway asked him to turn down his music. Annoyed, he asked Lanway to return a gift he had given her, and she threw it at him. He then beat her. After the beating, he said it wasn’t enough, so he took out his knife and stabbed her.

Patterson refused to give aid to Lanway and waited more than 10 minutes to call 911. During the trial, he testified that he killed Lanway in self-defense and that he was the victim of domestic violence, but there was no evidence to support his claim and he had no injuries. Lanway was especially vulnerable because she had hip dysplasia and could not walk without assistance and could not see out of one of her eyes.

In 2024, seven people were killed by a current or former intimate partner and there was one additional homicide victim, such as a family member, new boyfriend, or bystander, who died during domestic violence related incidents. While this is an increase from five domestic

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violence-related homicides the prior year, these types of homicides continue to remain lower than the average from the prior two decades. Figures for 2025 won't be available for several months.

Deputy District Attorney Nicolette Estrada prosecuted this case.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.