330 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 531-4040
SanDiegoDA.com

OFFICE OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
SUMMER STEPHAN
District Attorney

RACHEL SOLOV
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Contact: Tanya Sierra (619) 531-3315
En Español **Barbara Medina (619) 531-3305**

La Mesa Man Sentenced for Fatal Stabbing in El Cajon Apartment Complex

Stephen Mathews Coney Convicted of Killing 59-Year-Old Man

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan announced today that Stephen Mathews Coney, 30, was sentenced to 31-years-to life in prison for the fatal stabbing of a 59-year-old man during an altercation at an El Cajon apartment complex in August 2025.

A jury convicted Coney of second-degree murder on September 9, 2026 for killing Albert Johnson after deliberating for less than a day.

“This victim took his last breath in public in front of shocked children who witnessed the violent confrontation,” DA Stephan said. “While no sentence can undo the pain suffered by the victim’s loved ones, holding the defendant accountable is an important part of seeking justice. Our office remains committed to protecting victims and their families and ensuring that those responsible for violent crimes are held accountable.”

Coney, a jealous ex-boyfriend, confronted the victim, who had recently rekindled his 5-year relationship with Coney’s ex-girlfriend, in the parking lot of an apartment complex on South Sunshine Avenue near West Renette Avenue in El Cajon. During the confrontation, Coney pulled out a knife and fatally stabbed the victim. El Cajon Police Department officers responded to the scene and found Coney at the apartment complex, where he was arrested. The victim was taken to a local hospital, where he later died.

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The deadly confrontation took place in front of several children who were in the apartment parking lot. One child witness testified during the trial that she and her siblings and cousins saw Johnson defend himself, fight for his life, and take his last breath.

Nearly 30 family members were in attendance throughout trial and sentencing to support Johnson and relay the impact this murder has had on them and their loved ones. The victim's father, Wyatt Johnson said:

"Our family is stunned and left lonely because of the empty space that has been left because of the dastardly crime perpetrated on my son. Albert was making life a little better for those all around him and his children, who now are left without a father and example of a good man whom they could look up to, and know what righteous life is all about." – Wyatt Johnson

The case was prosecuted by **Deputy District Attorney Abrey Zora**.

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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.