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For Immediate Release

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Hate Crime Defendant Sentenced for Attack on Black Victim

Defendant Viciously Attacked Victim at a Homeless Shelter

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that a 52-year-old hate crime defendant was sentenced to nine years in prison for his violent attack on a Black victim while the two were in a homeless shelter in Carlsbad.

Defendant Jeremy Willis, who pleaded guilty to attempted murder and admitted that he inflicted great bodily injury upon the victim and committed a hate crime, repeatedly stabbed Cassius Hope at the La Posada de Guadalupe shelter in December 2023. When a Good Samaritan witness attempted to alert shelter staff, co-Defendant Scott Williams prevented the Good Samaritan from getting help.

“Cassius Hope was victimized in this brutal hate crimes case just because he was Black,” DA Stephan said. “Unfortunately hate crimes targeting Black people remains the highest category of hate crimes in our county and state. Our lead hate crimes prosecutor Abigail Dillon along with a victim advocate, investigator, paralegal, fought for and supported Mr. Hope throughout the process and were able to achieve justice on his behalf.”

The defendant, who is white, repeatedly called Hope the n-word and made other derogatory comments about Hope’s race while stabbing him at the homeless shelter. As we do with all victims of crime, our office will continue to offer services and support to the victim to assist him in moving past this horrible incident.

Co-Defendant Scott Williams, who pleaded guilty to attempting to dissuade a witness from reporting, was sentenced last week to 16 months in prison.

“Hate against one group is a threat to everyone and we won’t tolerate these crimes in our community,” DA Stephan said. “Anyone considering committing a hate crime should think again as they will be investigated, prosecuted and held accountable under the law.”

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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.

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