



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**DNA HIT LEADS TO MURDER PLEA, LIFE SENTENCE**

Today in Department 19 of the Tulare County Superior Court, South County Justice Center, Judge Antonio Reyes sentenced Raul Facio, age 35, to life in prison for the 2006 murder of 28-year-old Melissa Martin in Porterville. On August 9, 2019, Facio pleaded to first-degree murder.

On February 4, 2006, Porterville Police Department officers were dispatched to the Porterville Drive-In Theater regarding a female body found in a camper located in a storage building. Officers were able to determine the body was Martin's after finding her driver's license. While processing the scene, officers discovered semen located on Martin's clothing. Over 30 people volunteered their DNA for testing, but no matches were found.

Martin had not been seen for seven days before she was discovered. The cause of death was determined to be massive blood loss from a laceration to the carotid artery in her neck.

The day before Martin's body was found, Raul Facio was arrested in Porterville on drug charges. He did not appear at subsequent court hearings, but instead fled to Los Angeles.

On March 29, 2016, Facio was arrested for grand theft in Los Angeles. As part of the felony booking process, law enforcement swabbed a DNA sample and entered it into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). While in custody for the theft crimes, his DNA matched the sample obtained from Martin's clothing in 2006. Facio was charged with murder in Tulare County and extradited after serving his time in Los Angeles County. During the Porterville Police Department's extensive investigation into the crime, no leads were ever connected to Facio.

“As prosecutors, we are viewing evidence from a crime scene just as the jury does, through photographs, reports, and from witness' testimony. In Melissa Martin's case, in 2006, I was a homicide prosecutor and responded to the scene to consult with PPD detectives. I vividly recall the place where Melissa was murdered. I remember the trash, the isolation, and thinking to myself how terrified she must have been in her last moments of life. I have never forgotten Melissa and I am profoundly relieved and proud that her family was able to experience justice today,” said District Attorney Tim Ward.

“We will continue to doggedly pursue justice on cold case homicides. As long as I am District Attorney, we will maintain our dedicated staff to the investigation and prosecution of murderers who think they committed the perfect crime. We have not forgotten, nor will we ever forget the victims of violent crime,” Ward continued.

Under current California law, Facio will not be eligible for parole for 25 years.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare  
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