



HUMBOLDT COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Re: Tennessee Man Receives Twenty-Five Years for Death of Trinidad Man

Date: October 31, 2011

Contact: District Attorney Paul Gallegos

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On Monday, October 31, 2011, Donnie Ray Best, 54, of Tennessee, pled guilty to voluntary manslaughter for the death of William John Lundy, who was 61.

Best agreed to serve a twenty-five year term in the California Department of Corrections. The base term of eleven years for voluntary manslaughter was doubled, due to a prior “strike” conviction out of the State of Tennessee, and he admitted to being personally-armed during the commission of the present offense, which added 3 years. Best will be required to serve at least eighty-five percent of his twenty-five year sentence before being eligible for parole.

Best was arrested in Kansas in early September 2009 after a high speed pursuit by Kansas Highway Patrol. After stopping Best, officers discovered three firearms in the vehicle as well as indicia belonging to Lundy. They also determined that the car was registered to Lundy. Kansas officials took Best into custody and requested that Humboldt County officials conduct a welfare check at Lundy’s Trinidad residence, which led to the discovery of Lundy’s body.

“In light of Mr. Best’s age and the term of incarceration, I think he will spend the rest of his life in prison,” noted prosecuting Deputy District Attorney Ben McLaughlin. “Ideally, a life term is where we would have ended up after trial, but now there is a disposition that is definitive and final. Mr. Lundy’s family in Michigan was consulted regarding a negotiated disposition and approved of the plea. This was a collaborative, multi-agency effort, involving the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Justice. I thank each of these agencies for their effort assisting in the prosecution of Mr. Best.”

This case was successfully prosecuted by McLaughlin and the Honorable Judge W. Bruce Watson presided.