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CRIMINAL CASE UPDATE

FIVE HELD TO ANSWER FOR MURDER OF CANADIAN BUSINESSMAN

INDIO, CA. – Today, a Riverside County judge ordered five defendants to stand trial for the murder of a Canadian businessman visiting the Coachella Valley in December 2007.

Robert Lee Dunson (DOB: 03/10/82), Jackie Lynn Dunson (DOB: 06/15/76), Rogerlio Leon Zuniga (DOB: 10/21/76), Ronald Wesley Handwerk (DOB: 10/18/74), and Fernando Antonio Benavides Jr. (DOB: 09/20/78) are all charged with special circumstance first-degree murder.

The defendants created a plan to rob and kill the victim, 48-year-old William Dobbs. The victim was lured to an apartment in Indio after first meeting Benavides at a casino in Coachella. At the apartment, he was brutally beaten before he was murdered and his body dumped in a desert field.

In September 2009, after completion of the death penalty review process, District Attorney Rod Pacheco decided to seek the death penalty for Robert Dunson, Zuniga and Handwerk. Jackie Dunson and Benavides face life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The case, INF065236, is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Victoria Weiss. All five defendants are next scheduled to appear in court at 8:30 a.m., March 18, 2010, in Dept. 1B of the Indio Courthouse.

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