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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**JURY FINDS THAT MORENO VALLEY WOMAN SHOULD BE PUT TO DEATH  
FOR THE 2009 MURDER OF HER HUSBAND**

**RIVERSIDE** – Jurors have determined that the wife of a man found murdered in 2009 in Moreno Valley should be put to death for his murder.

About a month ago, on Aug. 21, 2017, a Riverside County jury found Lorraine Alison Hunter, DOB: 7-22-55, of Moreno Valley, guilty of the murder of her husband Albert Thomas. The DA's Office was seeking the death penalty in this case. Jurors found Hunter guilty of first-degree murder and found two special circumstance allegations to be true: that the murder was committed for financial gain and it was done while lying in wait. With that verdict and those findings, the trial then went to the penalty phase after which the same jurors had to determine whether Hunter should be sentenced to death or to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

On Thursday, Sept. 14, 2017, the jury found that Hunter should be sentenced to death. She is scheduled to return on Dec. 8, 2017, before Judge Mac Fisher in Dept. 52 at the Hall of Justice in Riverside for sentencing.

The victim in this case, Albert Thomas, was found the morning of Nov. 4, 2009, shot to death inside the sleeper portion of a semi tractor-trailer that he drove for his job. The vehicle was found in a dirt lot in the area of Eucalyptus and Edgemont avenues in Moreno Valley. Hunter was interviewed after her husband was found murdered and claimed to not be aware of any life insurance policies Thomas may have had at the time of his death. Homicide detectives determined that Thomas did have two policies through the trucking company for which he worked totaling \$225,000 which would double in the case of a murder, increasing to \$450,000. The administrator at the trucking company told detectives that Hunter, prior to Thomas being found dead, had personally been told about the policies and that they doubled in the case of a murder.

Homicide detectives were unable to obtain enough evidence to arrest anyone at the time for Thomas's murder. But then in late 2011, a relative of the victim and Hunter provided detectives with further information that ultimately led to Hunter's arrest and the filing of a murder charge.

Along with the \$450,000 life insurance policies through the victim's employer, there was another active policy in the amount of \$750,000 that had been applied for by Hunter, who forged her husband's signature, about six months before the murder. Hunter was unable to collect on any of the policies because she was not able to obtain a certified copy of the death certificate.

During the penalty phase of the trial, when jurors had to determine if Hunter should be sentenced to death, they were presented evidence by our prosecutor that Hunter's common-law husband was murdered in Inglewood, Calif. in 1996. It appears that Hunter collected approximately \$312,000 in life insurance policies after his death. No one was ever charged with his murder.

The Riverside County case, RIF1105356, was prosecuted by Deputy DA William Robinson of the DA's Major Crimes Division.

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