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NEWS RELEASE
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**GRAND JURY INDICTMENT UNSEALED IN CASE
OF FEBRUARY MURDER OF MASSAI COLE**

RIVERSIDE – Today, Sept. 9, 2020, a criminal grand jury indictment was unsealed charging a Riverside man with murder and two special circumstances - that the victim was intentionally killed because of his race and lying in wait.

Darren Peter Zesk, DOB: 2-7-01, is now eligible for the death penalty based on the two special circumstances.

Darren Zesk is accused of firing the shots that killed Massai Cole, 18, at a party in Moreno Valley on Feb. 1, 2020.

Zesk and his nephew, Jared Lee Zesk, DOB: 9-6-01, were charged in February in case RIF2000463 with Cole's murder. Jared Zesk faces life in prison if convicted as currently charged.

In July, a Riverside County Superior Court judge found at a preliminary hearing that there was sufficient evidence for the Zesks to stand trial for murder.

The Riverside County criminal grand jury indictment, case RIF2010146, of Darren Zesk comes as a result of new evidence that was uncovered after the preliminary hearing during the ongoing investigation into Cole's murder. Details about the new evidence will not be released at this time.

Massai Cole was attending a party at a home on Century Street in Moreno Valley on the evening of Jan. 31, 2020. Based on the investigation that followed the murder, the Zesks arrived at the party after midnight on Feb. 1. There was a fight involving Jared Zesk and he and his uncle left the party.

When the Zesks returned to the party about 1:30 a.m., investigators believe Darren Zesk specifically targeted Massai Cole, then shot him multiple times, killing him.

Jared Zesk is scheduled to be arraigned Sept. 18, 2020, on the information following the preliminary hearing.

Darren Zesk entered a plea of not guilty at the Sept. 9, 2020, arraignment on the grand jury indictment and now has a trial readiness conference scheduled for Oct. 19, 2020, in Dept. 41 at the Hall of Justice in Riverside.

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