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NEWS RELEASE
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**PALM DESERT WOMAN SENTENCED FOR THE 2016 MURDER
OF ELDERLY VICTIM UNDER HER CARE**

RIVERSIDE – A Palm Desert woman was sentenced today, Dec. 21, 2020, for the 2016 murder of a 69-year-old woman in her care.

Marilyn Joy Zemek, DOB: 8-13-58, was convicted by a Riverside County jury on Nov. 19, 2020, of first-degree murder, elder abuse causing death, two counts of grand theft, identity theft, and perjury. The jury also found true a sentencing enhancement of taking more than \$100,000 during the commission of two felonies involving fraud.

Today, at the Hall of Justice in Riverside, Judge Samuel Diaz sentenced Zemek to a total of 30 years to life in prison. She must serve a five-year sentence and then begin a sentence of 25 years to life in prison.

In April 2016, Zemek became the paid caregiver for 69-year-old Pamela Sue Heislar-Powell of Indio, and two months later the victim was found dead.

Heislar-Powell had serious health conditions and could not care for herself. She also had recently overdosed on her seizure medication. While later under the care of Zemek, the victim again overdosed and was hospitalized before being placed in a skilled nursing facility. Against the advice of medical personnel, Zemek took the victim from the nursing facility and to Zemek's longtime criminal defense attorney to draft a new will and trust naming Zemek as the sole beneficiary.

Zemek then left the victim alone with medications she was no longer supposed to take, leading to another overdose which resulted in Heislar-Powell's death.

After the victim's death, Zemek spent more than \$200,000 from the victim's bank account despite being legally required to hold the funds in a trust. She also used the victim's information to ultimately spend thousands of dollars in credit, including impersonating Heislar-Powell in a telephone call to the victim's credit card company so Zemek could keep the victim's credit line open. Zemek also filed a false declaration in a probate case about her activity.

The case, RIF1900604, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys Tim Cross and Sylwia Luttrell.

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