



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

Stanislaus County  
832 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300  
Modesto, CA 95354  
Mailing address: POB 442, Modesto, CA 95353  
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 525-5545

**Birgit Fladager**  
**District Attorney**  
Carol Shipley  
Assistant District Attorney  
Chief Deputy District Attorneys  
Jerry Begen  
Steve Casey  
John Goold  
Dave Harris

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

Date: 02/12/2007  
Re: Joshua Cothran 1082214

**For More Information Contact:**

John Goold, Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Phone: (209) 525-5550

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Monday, February 12, 2007

STANISLAUS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY BIRGIT FLADAGER ANNOUNCED TODAY that defendant Joshua Cothran, age 26, was convicted of one count of voluntary manslaughter and three counts of dependent adult abuse on Friday, February 9 in Department 3 before Judge Whiteside. Deputy District Attorney Colleen Rhodes prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

Cothran had been charged in the death of his wife, Sarah Cothran, of Modesto. Evidence presented at a preliminary hearing conducted September 20, 2005, provided probable cause to believe that Cothran had intentionally murdered his wife. At the time of her death, Sarah Cothran was confined to a wheelchair and was dependent upon a ventilator for assistance breathing.

While the case was moving towards trial, it became apparent that the evidence was unlikely to be strong enough to prove to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that Cothran's intent was malicious and that he premeditated the killing. These elements must be proved in order to obtain a murder conviction.

In resolving the case, Cothran was sentenced to a prison term of fourteen years for the voluntary manslaughter and the three counts of abuse of a dependent adult. He must serve 85% of his sentence in prison custody before becoming eligible for parole.

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