



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Stanislaus County
832 12th 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
Alan Cassidy
Dave Harris

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 21, 2009
Re: Joseph Ferris
Prison sentence for Mayhem, Assault
Dissuading a Witness and Attempted
Voluntary Manslaughter

For More Information Contact:

Carol Shipley, Assistant District Attorney
Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Joseph Ferris, age 47, of Modesto, was sentenced today after being convicted by a jury on November 9, 2009 of Mayhem, Assault with Great Bodily Injury, Felony Dissuading a Witness and Attempted Voluntary Manslaughter. Deputy District Attorney Annette Rees prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events that occurred on November 26, 2007. The victim, a former girlfriend of Ferris's, brought over their 2-month-old child. Ferris grabbed the victim and began brutally beating her inside his home. The ordeal lasted for over 5 hours. Finally, Ferris agreed to drive the victim to the hospital, but only after he concocted a lie to tell the police. Ferris's roommate--and fellow karate teacher--drove the victim's car to Ferris's karate studio where he parked it. The two then drove the victim to Memorial Medical Center where Ferris claimed that his ex-girlfriend had been beaten and robbed by two unknown men behind the karate studio. Modesto Police Officer Cox soon learned the truth and arrested Ferris. The officer noted blood on Ferris's hands and shirt.

The victim testified at trial and sobbed as she recounted the details of her ordeal. The jury saw photos of the victim's horribly swollen face - including, argued Deputy District Attorney Rees, "the tread marks of defendant's shoe on her face, her forehead, and her chest." The victim was hospitalized for 5 days and has required several surgeries since then. She said, "You have taken something from this family, my family, that we will never have back." The victim's young son, who had been a karate student of Ferris's, also spoke. "I trusted you. You are truly evil. I hope you never get out and do this to anyone else."

The Honorable John Freeland, who presided over the trial, sentenced Ferris to 11 years and 6 months in state prison.

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