



Maricopa County Attorney

RICHARD M. ROMLEY

301 WEST JEFFERSON STREET • PHOENIX, AZ 85003
PH. (602) 506-3411 • TDD (602) 506-4352 • FAX (602) 506-8102
WWW.MARICOPACOUNTYATTORNEY.ORG

MEDIA CONTACT:
BILL FITZGERALD
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
FITZGERA@MCAO.MARICOPA.GOV
(602) 506-3170 (OFFICE)
(602) 489-6913 (CELL)

NEWS RELEASE

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Charges Dismissed Against Lisa Randall in Death Penalty Case; Guilty Verdict in Shooting Death of Officer Eric Shuhandler

Charges against Lisa Kathleen Randall (DOB 6/8/61) were dropped today. Randall was charged with first-degree murder for the death of a 4-month-old baby she was caring for in her Peoria home in 2007. Today, three years later, the case originally filed as a death penalty case under former County Attorney Andrew Thomas was dismissed "in the interests of justice" by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office by way of motion in front of Judge Michael Kemp.

On April 18, 2007, the Peoria Fire and Police Departments responded to a call regarding an unresponsive 4-month-old baby, Dillon Utela. Dillon was taken to the hospital and died the next day. The Medical Examiner listed the cause of death as blunt force head trauma and the manner as homicide. In November of 2007, charges of first-degree murder and child abuse were filed against Randall. In January 2008, the death penalty was sought by Andrew Thomas, former Maricopa County Attorney.

After several hearings and a finding by the presiding judge that the claims against Randall lacked sufficient proof, Ms. Randall was released from custody. After returning to the office in April 2010, County Attorney Rick Romley ordered a review of all death penalty cases, including Ms. Randall's. An expert opinion was sought and concluded that Dillon did not die of blunt force trauma as initially indicated, but that the cause of death is undetermined and may have been a result of a SIDS-like event. Previous experts agreed with this conclusion and as a result of the lack of evidence supporting the claim that Dillon died as a result of blunt force trauma at the hands of Ms. Randall, the County Attorney's Office ordered that the charges against Ms. Randall be dismissed.

Also today, defendant Damian Irrizarry (DOB 5/14/79) was convicted of eight counts of aggravated assault, four counts of drive by shooting, and one count of unlawful flight from a law enforcement vehicle. These charges stemmed from the shooting death of Lieutenant Eric Shuhandler of the Gilbert Police Department during a traffic stop of a truck driven by the defendant which led to a 50 mile chase that reached maximum speeds of 99 miles per hour before the defendant's vehicle ran out of gas. Sentencing is scheduled for August 27, and Irrizarry's co-defendant, Christopher Redondo, is scheduled to go on trial next month.

County Attorney Rick Romley stated, "We hope this guilty verdict will bring Lt. Shuhandler's family some measure of closure. We will continue to prosecute the crimes arising out of this horrible tragedy to the fullest possible extent."