



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

5/21/18

**STRATHMORE MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR
ATTEMPTED MURDER OF SHERIFF'S DEPUTY**

On May 18, 2018, in Department 17 of the Tulare County Superior Court, South County Justice Center, Judge Michael Sheltzer sentenced Michael Yocom, age 51, of Strathmore, to 40-years-to-life in prison for attempted murder. On January 16, 2018, a jury found Yocom guilty of attempted premeditated murder on a peace officer, assault on a peace officer, criminal threats, resisting an executive officer, firearm removal from a peace officer, and violating a restraining order. The jury also found true the special allegations that Yocom used a deadly weapon while resisting the officer.

In a separate hearing on January 18, 2018, the Court found Yocom's prior convictions true. Yocom possesses a strike for burglary in 1995, four convictions for possession of a controlled substance, and a 2008 conviction for grand theft, possession of stolen property, and felony evading of a peace officer.

In the afternoon of August 28, 2016, a Tulare County Sheriff's deputy was dispatched to a residence near Strathmore, where he determined Yocom was in violation of a restraining order. As the deputy prepared to place him in handcuffs, Yocom struck the deputy in the head. Dazed, the deputy took out his baton and moved towards Yocom, eventually drawing his firearm when Yocom advanced. When Yocom pled for the deputy not to shoot, the deputy re-holstered his gun, and struck Yocom with his baton.

Yocom, now enraged, attempted to take the baton and repeatedly told the deputy that he was going to kill him. The deputy fell backwards and Yocom jumped on top of him, and choked him. As the deputy struggled to breathe, Yocom removed the deputy's handcuffs from his duty belt and began striking him with them. Yocom then began to reach for the deputy's firearm, pulling it more

than half-way out of the holster. The deputy fought for control of the firearm, fearing he would be killed. The two struggled over the firearm until the deputy was finally able to push Yocom off. Free from his attacker, the deputy shot Yocom several times. Lindsay Department of Public Safety officers and Porterville Police Department officers soon arrived to assist, and Yocom was taken in to custody.

“This was a senseless act of violence, but not a random act of violence. The victim, who we are so grateful survived this vicious attack, was assaulted solely because of his calling to protect and serve our community,” said District Attorney Tim Ward when Yocom was convicted in January. “Violence against our men and women in uniform will neither be tolerated nor accepted as part of the job.”

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Jessica Weatherly of the Porterville Division and investigated by Bruce Sokoloff of the Porterville Police Department.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
Assistant District Attorney Dave Alavezos (559) 636-5494*