

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS – PLYMOUTH DISTRICT
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SJC UPHOLDS FIRST DEGREE MURDER CONVICTION IN STABBING DEATH

BROCKTON – The Supreme Judicial Court, the highest court in Massachusetts, upheld the First Degree Murder conviction of a woman found guilty of stabbing her ex-girlfriend’s AA sponsor to death in Bridgewater, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz announced today.

On October 11, 2012, a Plymouth County jury found Eunice Field guilty of Murder in the First Degree for the August 9, 2010 death of 62-year-old Lorraine Wachsman, Field’s ex-girlfriend’s Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor.

The murder took place at the Kingswood Park Village apartment complex in Bridgewater after Field’s longtime girlfriend had ended their relationship. The evidence at trial revealed that Field went to Wachsman’s apartment and stabbed the woman to death. After the murder, Field drove to the Brockton Police Department and complained of chest pain. As officers assisted her, they found her to be covered in blood and Field stated that she had just killed someone. Field blamed Wachsman for the breakup of her relationship with her girlfriend.

Field was convicted by a jury on the theories of deliberate premeditation and extreme atrocity or cruelty. She was sentenced to a mandatory term of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Field subsequently appealed the conviction, raising several claims of ineffective assistance of counsel, all centering on trial counsel’s failure to consult with a mental health expert.

The SJC issued an opinion today holding that although Field’s trial counsel unreasonably failed to consult with a mental health expert, Field failed to establish that such a consultation would have provided a basis to challenge the theory of premeditated murder. The SJC further found that there was compelling evidence of premeditation and concluded that consultation with a mental health expert would not have altered the jury’s conviction on the theory of deliberate premeditation. Finally, the SJC found that Field did not raise a substantial doubt as to her competency to stand trial and that there was no evidence that Field lacked the ability to consult with her attorney to a reasonable degree of understanding.

Assistant District Attorney Stacey Gauthier prosecuted the case on appeal and Assistant District Attorneys Thomas Flanagan and Jennifer Sprague prosecuted the case at trial for Plymouth County.