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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Woodland Man Sentenced to Life Without Parole

Rohail Sarwar was Convicted of Murder with Special Circumstances and Sexual Assault

(Woodland, CA) – September 13, 2019 - On September 12, 2019, the Honorable Judge Paul Richardson sentenced 28-year-old Woodland man, Rohail Sarwar, to life without the possibility of parole for the August 21, 2018, murder of Junying Lu at the Cottonwood Massage parlor in Woodland, CA. On August 1, 2019, a Yolo County jury convicted Sarwar of First Degree Murder, with the special circumstances of lying in wait, the special circumstance of committing the murder in the commission of a burglary, and an enhancement for the personal use of a weapon. The jury also convicted Sarwar of a sexual assault against a separate victim, which occurred about a month before the murder.

The evidence presented during trial established that in late July or early August of 2018, Rohail Sarwar received a massage in Cottonwood Massage. After the massage Sarwar attacked the masseuse, S.X., demanding sex. After a struggle Sarwar abandoned the assault and left on foot. That assault had initially gone unreported, because the masseuse did not think that she would be believed.

On August 21, 2018, Sarwar called his mistress, wanting to meet for sex. When she was unable to meet with him, Sarwar walked to the Cottonwood Plaza, where Cottonwood Massage is located. Sarwar entered a liquor store, purchased a knife, and then monitored the front door of Cottonwood Massage for several minutes. When the only customer inside left, Sarwar entered Cottonwood Massage and requested a massage from Junying Lu, the only employee working

inside. While inside Cottonwood Massage Sarwar stabbed Mrs. Lu fourteen times, four of which were fatal.

Officers with the Woodland Police Department conducted an extensive investigation. Officers collected video of Sarwar buying the murder weapon, monitoring the entrance to Cottonwood Massage and then entering. Video from a nearby business showed Sarwar walking on Cottonwood Street after the murder, with his hands covered in blood. The victim's blood was found on clothing at Sarwar's home and Sarwar's fingerprint was found in the victim's blood on the murder weapon.

The trial began on July 15, 2019, and the jury reached its verdict on August 1, 2019, after about six hours of deliberation.

Judge Richardson sentenced Sarwar to the highest sentence available following the conviction, which was life without the possibility of parole, with an additional one year for personal use of a weapon, and an additional six years for the prior sexual assault.

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