

## Guilty Verdict in Red Bluff Teen's Murder



Tehama County District Attorney Gregg Cohen, second from right, issues a statement following the guilty verdict Thursday morning in the Quintin Bealer murder trial in Sacramento. – Margaret Baum — Red Bluff Daily News

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By DAILY NEWS, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS and RED BLUFF DAILY NEWS |

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Sacramento >> A jury has found a Red Bluff man guilty of first-degree murder in the strangling of a 14-year-old Red Bluff girl in 2013.

Quentin Bealer, 42, was convicted of murdering Marysa Nichols, whose body was found a half-mile behind Red Bluff High School on Feb. 28, 2013.

The trial began in late April and was marked by several delays, including warrants being issued for the biological father of the victim, and statements made by a juror that caused Judge Delbert Oros to suspend deliberation and replace the juror with an alternate.

The jury reached a verdict Tuesday after four hours of deliberation, but the verdict was held until Wednesday morning.

"It is such a relief and I'm glad it's over," said Diane Whitmire, Nichols' mother.

Whitmire said she was glad the jury saw the truth in the evidence.

"I'm so grateful justice has been served for Marysa," Whitmire said.

The trial, including jury selection, lasted for nine weeks with 378 exhibits entered into evidence. During those nine weeks, jurors heard testimony from 67 separate witnesses and experienced several delays.

Some of these delays included a bench warrant being served for Nichols' father failing to appear in court, as well as the suspension of deliberation due to juror misconduct.

Bealer's attorney, Shon Northam, was not present Wednesday because he had another court appearance in Redding. Bealer had a substitute lawyer for the reading of the verdict, who polled the jury. All jurors answered guilty.

"This was a very difficult case for all of us," said Judge Delbert Oros. "The community of Red Bluff was uniquely affected by this case."

Oros told the jury that in his nine years on the bench he had never seen a jury with as much determination.

Tehama County District Attorney Gregg Cohen thanked both the jury and the prosecution for their time and efforts in the case.

“We in Tehama County thank you wholeheartedly for your verdict,” Cohen said referencing the jury. “Thank you for your patience, thank you for your common sense and most importantly thank you for justice in this terrible, terrible case involving the brutal and senseless killing of a 14-year-old truly innocent child victim.”

“Now it is final, now it is real, now there is justice for Marysa,” Cohen said. “And, yes now there will be justice for Quentin Ray Bealer — child murderer, child molester, child killer.”

For some jurors the trial took a personal toll. Bradlee McCarty said the trial was difficult to cope with and he sometimes couldn’t sleep.

“It was a lot to process and it was a long time,” McCarty said. “It was a cool experience to see how the process worked.”

McCarty said he had been summoned for jury duty before, but this was his first time serving on a jury.

“I looked him in the face and he looked back at me, but I just didn’t know,” McCarty said when asked if he thought Bealer was guilty for the entire length of the trial.

McCarty noted that he was swayed when he heard testimony about all of the DNA evidence on the tank top that was used to strangle Nichols. He also said Bealer didn’t seem to know his timing the day Nichols went missing and seemed to be on the fence regarding his whereabouts.

Bealer’s sentencing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. July 8 and Cohen said the hope is that the sentencing will take place in Red Bluff.