

Death penalty advocated for two Anaheim slayings

Prosecutor says gang member killed women during burglaries.

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SANTA ANA An Anaheim street-gang member "came as a thief" when he broke into two Anaheim apartments in October 2000, and left as a murderer, a prosecutor told an Orange County jury Wednesday.

Edgar Omar Osorio, 24, killed two women, including a civilian employee of the Anaheim Police Department, on East Street when they walked in on burglaries in progress, Deputy District Attorney Howard Gundy said in opening statements of Osorio's capital murder trial.

Osorio set the apartments on fire to cover up the crimes, Gundy said.

Osorio, whose gang nickname is "Criminal," should be put to death because he committed murders during the course of burglary, robbery and arson, Gundy said.

Deputy Public Defender Hector Chaparro told the jury in his opening statement that there is no physical evidence linking Osorio to the scenes of the crimes and that the witnesses who say he confessed had motives to lie.

Chaparro said some of the friends who linked Osorio to the two killings were pressured by Anaheim detectives eager to solve the killing of one of their own.

The defense attorney also told the jury that one victim told police before she died that her attacker was a balding white man about 40 years old.

Osorio was arrested hiding in bushes near his aunt's Anaheim residence two days after traffic control officer Angela King, 34, and her neighbor, Betty M. Easley, 70, were attacked in separate incidents.

King was shot in the forehead when she grabbed at Osorio as he attempted to flee her apartment, Gundy said.

Osorio, who has gang tattoos on his stomach, rode a bicycle to a friend's house a mile away after that shooting and blurted out, "I just shot a pig in the face," Gundy told the jury.

Osorio added, "I left my fingerprints everywhere. I've got to go back and burn the place," the prosecutor contended.

But before he torched King's apartment, Osorio broke into Easley's residence, Gundy said.

And Easley, who was returning home after attending a prayer meeting, was beaten, choked and stabbed, and left for dead.

Easley lived on life support for more than two months after the attack, but eventually died from smoke inhalation from the fires set inside her apartment, Gundy said.

Elisa Valencia, 45, Osorio's mother, told reporters shortly after his arrest that her son had been in and out of juvenile facilities since his early teens for crimes such as stealing bikes and cars.

His is the first death-penalty case to come to trial in Orange County in 2005.

The last Orange County killer to receive a death sentence was Maurice Gerald Steskal, who in February 2004 was sentenced to die for the 1999 assault-rifle ambush of sheriff's Deputy Bradley J. Riches.