



**Twelfth Judicial District**  
**State of New Mexico**  
OTERO, LINCOLN COUNTIES

**SCOT D. KEY**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2024

**JOSEPH SANDERS FOUND GUILTY OF FIRST DEGREE MURDER**

The Twelfth Judicial District Attorney, Scot D. Key, announces that on Thursday, December 5, 2024, an Otero County Jury convicted Joseph Sanders, 54 of Bent, New Mexico, of First-Degree Murder (willful and deliberate), Attempted Armed Robbery, Tampering with Evidence, Unlawful taking of a Motor Vehicle, Unlawful Carrying of a Deadly Weapon, and the Use or Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

On October 11, 2023, Joseph Sanders entered the Weed convenience store in Weed, NM. After Sanders' multiple failed attempts to obtain gasoline and merchandise from the store without having to pay for them, Sanders exited the convenience store, retrieved a .22 caliber revolver from his pickup truck and reentered the store. Sanders approached the counter, pulled the .22 caliber revolver from his waistband and shot the store clerk, 34 year old Laura McCormick striking her twice. Sanders then fled from the scene leaving Mrs. McCormick to succumb to her injuries. Sanders then proceeded to hide his vehicle deep into the forest in the Bluewater Canyon area just outside of Weed. Sanders was apprehended by law enforcement later the same day, while driving a stolen side by side utility vehicle.

On December 6, 2024, the Honorable John P. Sugg sentenced Sanders to the maximum sentence allowed by law: 13 years and life in prison for the associated crimes and murder.

The case was investigated by the Otero County Sheriff's Office and the Twelfth Judicial District Major Crimes Unit and prosecuted by Deputy Chief District Attorney James Dickens, Assistant District Attorney Brandi Red and Assistant District Attorney Ryan Suggs.

TWELFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
OTERO COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
1000 NEW YORK AVENUE, ROOM 101  
ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO 88310-6998  
TELEPHONE: (575) 437-3640  
FAX: (575) 434-2507