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Sentencing set in Chavez student killing

Victoria Franco
The Stockton Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

A 23-year-old man will be sentenced to 22 years in state prison next month for the murder of Thai Khin — the 17-year-old Cesar Chavez High School student who was shot and killed at Unity Park in 2023.

Guillermo Lopez Jr., who was 19 at the time of Khin's death, appeared in court Sept. 28, before San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Chrishna Martinez, for a resolution in the case.

Amanda Meays, Khin's mother, sat in the courtroom gallery as the details of Lopez's deal were discussed.

During the hearing, Lopez entered a



Lopez

plea of no contest to robbery and voluntary manslaughter. He also admitted to an enhancement of the personal use of a firearm.

On April 12, 2023, Khin was attempting to break up a fight during a robbery while he and his friend were at Unity Park in Stockton, according to Khin's family.

The family said the alleged robbers were after Thai's friend's gold necklace, and when the teenager tried to step in to help his friend, he was shot.

Khin was found at the park suffering from a gunshot wound and was rushed

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The sister of slain 17-year-old Cesar Chavez High School student Thai Khin, who was shot and killed in April of 2023, wears a necklace with his picture on it while attending the arraignment of Guillermo Lopez Jr. on Jan. 9, 2025 on charges of her brother's homicide. CLIFFORD OTO/THE STOCKTON RECORD



Defendant Wesley Brownlee, left, appears with attorney Allison Nobert at the San Joaquin County Courthouse in downtown Stockton on Tuesday Oct. 25, 2022. MADALYN WRIGHT/COURTHOUSE NEWS

Jail staff testify in alleged serial killer competency trial

Victoria Franco
The Stockton Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

Eight San Joaquin County correctional officers took the stand Friday, Oct. 2, to testify in the competency hearing for alleged Stockton serial killer Wesley Brownlee.

Brownlee, 47, was arrested in October 2022 in connection with the deaths of six men in Stockton between 2021 and 2022. He is also charged with the attempted murder of Natasha LaTour — a woman believed to be the lone survivor of the string of killings.

Jurors were instructed that the only

issue in the proceeding is whether Brownlee is mentally competent to stand trial, not whether he is guilty of the charges against him.

Brownlee processed into county jail

On the 10th day of trial, different correctional officers who have worked inside the jail since Brownlee was arrested, recounted interactions with him over the last four years.

Correctional Officer Jason Rohdenburg, who has worked in classification for 15 years, was the first to testify.

As a correctional officer assigned to

classification, Rohdenburg's role when Brownlee was booked into the San Joaquin County Jail was to conduct an interview to determine his housing classification.

Rohdenburg said officers conduct risk assessment forms, a standardized set of questions asked of inmates entering the jail. The questions help officers determine whether inmates have mental health issues, are experiencing drug or alcohol withdrawal, require protective custody or have gang affiliations.

"Every single person who comes to

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CA leaders condemn Trump's remarks

James Ward
USA TODAY NETWORK

A comment by President Donald Trump during an Oct. 5 campaign rally in Nebraska sparked immediate backlash from California leaders after he appeared to suggest that the potential destruction of Los Angeles or San Diego would be "a small price to pay" amid tensions tied to the war with Iran.

Speaking at a midterm election rally in Grand Island, Nebraska, Trump discussed higher gasoline prices resulting from the conflict and argued that Americans should accept the economic impact.

"They can take out a city. Let 'em take out Los Angeles, let 'em take out San Diego. This is a very small price to pay," Trump said, adding that the war was nearly over and describing the costs as "a small price to pay for keeping the world safe."

The remarks quickly circulated online, drawing sharp condemnation from California officials who accused the president of treating millions of Californians as expendable.

Trump has shrugged off cost-of-living concerns stemming from the Iran conflict before, and he previously downplayed his concerns about the potential for Iran or its allies to launch an attack on U.S. soil.

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