

Worcester man pleads guilty to murder in 2016 killing of Vanessa Marcotte

“A 36-year-old Worcester man pleaded guilty to murder in the 2016 killing of Vanessa Marcotte, according to Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

Angelo Colon-Ortiz pleaded guilty to charges of second-degree murder and unarmed robbery. He was sentenced to serve life in prison on the murder charge and, between the two charges, will not be eligible for parole for 45 years. He will serve 20 years to 20 years and a day on the unarmed robbery charge and then will begin serving a life sentence for murder, which includes a minimum of 25 years before parole eligibility.

The disposition removes the right of trial-related appeals for Colon-Ortiz. The resolution was completed after the defense suggested the plea to the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office. The Marcotte family asked the office to accept the plea after continued communication and discussion with the District Attorney’s Office. This disposition spares the Marcotte family from listening to the details of Vanessa’s death during a trial.

“The completion of this case is the result of the tireless and committed work of the Massachusetts State Police, Princeton Police and Assistant District Attorneys who were involved in the investigation and prosecution of Vanessa’s killer,” Mr. Early said. “We know nothing can bring Vanessa back, but we know, through the meticulous work of the prosecutors and investigators involved, justice will be served, and the plea allows Vanessa’s family to move on from this tragedy.”

“We are thankful and gratified the legal process has accomplished what we always wished for, that this man will now

be in a place where he can't hurt anyone else like the way he hurt Vanessa," the Marcotte family said. "To honor and remember Vanessa, we will continue to educate and protect women through the Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation.

We fully agree with this disposition and appreciate the District Attorney's Office for reaching this resolution. We are extremely thankful to the Massachusetts State Police Detectives, Princeton Police, Assistant District Attorneys and Victim Witness Advocate who worked to bring justice for Vanessa and who supported us throughout this process."

"Every 68 seconds a person is assaulted in the United States, and one in ten girls have experienced harassment," said Caroline Tocci and Ashley McNiff, co-founders of the Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation. "Vanessa would have wanted us to take action. She'd be proud of what we're accomplishing in her honor to make the world a safer place."

The Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation was established in 2017 in Vanessa's honor. Since its inception, it has trained thousands of women at self-defense workshops. It has also educated individuals of all ages at workshops and webinars on violence prevention, runner safety, boundary setting, and healthy relationships. Vanessa loved to run, therefore many of the Foundation's fundraising efforts revolve around running.

Ms. Marcotte, 27, had worked for Google in New York City. She was in Princeton visiting her family in August 2016. She went out for a walk on the afternoon of Aug. 7, 2016 and was reported missing after she did not return to her family's home. Ms. Marcotte's body was discovered in the woods not far from her family's home later that evening.

Investigators received more than 1,300 tips as authorities investigated the case. A major break came when a trooper with the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Worcester County District Attorney's Office spotted a dark SUV

in Worcester. The driver and SUV matched a description of the suspect in Ms. Marcotte's killing.

The trooper wrote down the license plate number on his hand and authorities were then able to obtain DNA from the suspect, who was identified as Colon-Ortiz. His DNA led to a match from evidence collected at the crime scene.

Mr. Early thanked the Massachusetts State Police, including Det. Lt. Alan Hunte and the State Police Detectives assigned to the District Attorney's Office, Chief Michele Powers and the Princeton Police, the Massachusetts State Police Crime Lab, the Commonwealth Fusion Center, the State Police Crime Scene Services, the State Police SERT Team, the State Police Underwater Recovery Unit, the State Police Air Wing and the State Police K-9 unit, VFAS, Worcester Police, and the Central Mass Police Chiefs for all their hard work and resources in this investigation and prosecution.

"I would like to commend Senior First Assistant Jeffrey Travers and Assistant District Attorneys Terry McLaughlin and Jane Sullivan for their hard work on this case," Mr. Early said. "I'd also like to thank Victim Witness Advocate Maria Deyette for being with the Marcotte family throughout this long and painful process for Vanessa's family, including her recently-departed father John Marcotte."-Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.