



For Immediate Release

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Mansfield Woman Given Two Life Sentences for Smothering Young Niece

Fort Worth, TX – A Tarrant County jury found Mercia Sneed, 47, guilty of capital murder and injury to a child causing serious bodily injury for suffocating her 9-year-old niece, Melodi. Sneed was sentenced to two life terms, one without the possibility of parole.

Tarrant County Assistant District Attorneys Charlie Boulware and Victoria Lydahl prosecuted this case.

"Today is about Melodi," Boulware said during closing arguments. "Melodi's family has waited seven years, seven long years."

"We are asking for a swift verdict for Melodi's family and for Melodi."

On July 27, 2019, Sneed was staying at her brother's new home on Eagle Drive in Mansfield, where family members had gathered to help unpack and celebrate the move.

Late that night, after relatives had gone to sleep throughout the house, Sneed was in the game room where Melodi had fallen asleep on a couch.

Sneed told her 13-year-old son to leave the room.

Once he was down the hallway, Sneed picked up a blue and white pillow and pressed it over Melodi's face for several minutes, using her body weight to keep the child from moving.

The pillow muffled Melodi's attempts to scream.

"She fought. She screamed. She tried to stay alive," Lydahl told jurors. "But she was only nine."

When Melodi stopped struggling, Sneed lifted the pillow, wiped her niece's face, and removed the pillow from the house.

Hours later, Melodi was found unresponsive and police were called.

Sneed's son told officers he saw his mother smother his cousin. Sneed later admitted to suffocating Melodi.

"It's extremely cruel and criminal and there's only one person to blame," Boulware said.

DA Investigator Matt Hardy and Victim Coordinator Elizabeth Garcia also worked on this case. Our office thanks the Mansfield Police Department for their work on this case and for their commitment to keeping our community safe.