

Elmarr gets life

Longmont man sentenced for '87 murder of ex-wife

By Pierrette J. Shields
Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — A Longmont man was sentenced to life in prison Monday for the murder of his ex-wife 22 years ago.

The sentence handed down to Kevin Elmarr includes no possibility of parole for 40 years.

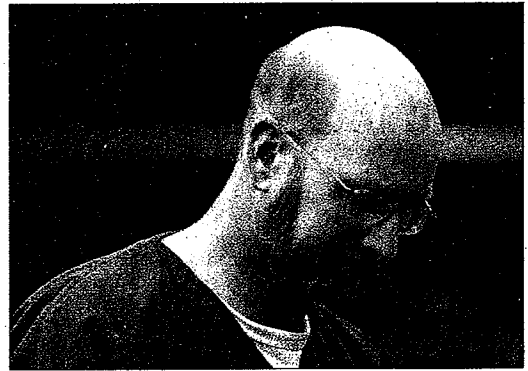
A jury convicted Elmarr in August of the first-degree murder of his ex-wife, Carol Murphy, in 1987. Two hikers found her nude

body face down and partially covered with aspen branches on May 23, 1987.

Elmarr, 52, did not speak at his sentencing, and Boulder District Judge James C. Klein noted that law mandated the sentence he handed down.

Prosecutor Bruce Langer, though, said during the hearing that he believed the sentence truly meant justice for Murphy and her family, even if it's belated.

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Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call

After being sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 40 years on Monday, Kevin Elmarr walks out of Boulder District Court in Boulder. Elmarr was convicted in August of the first-degree murder of his ex-wife, Carol Murphy, 22 years ago.

ELMARR: Life sentence

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"After committing this murder, Kevin Elmarr was able to walk free for two decades," Langer said.

Murphy's younger sisters, who live in Kansas, submitted videotaped statements that were shown in court.

Cahnaya Galbraith said she lost her older sister when she was so young that she never really got to know her and become best friends as sisters often do.

"I hurt my whole life not just because I lost my sister, but because my mom ached every day for my sister," she said.

She also addressed Elmarr and said she hoped she would one day be able to forgive Elmarr.

"I hope someday you will be able to tell your children, your grandchildren and my family why you took her life."

Conraya Carpenter said she was only 6 when her sister was killed.

"I don't have any pictures of me and her together. My only memory of her is at the funeral, seeing her in the coffin," she said.

Lewis Carpenter, Murphy's stepfather, traveled from Kansas and sat through the entire trial.

He returned to hear the sentencing, something he said he did for his late wife, who long mourned her daughter's death.

He said he hopes the trial's conclusion brings peace to the family.

"I hope and pray this brings closure to Cahnaya and Conraya and Carol's kids," he said.

Elmarr's wife, who kept vigil outside of her hus-

band's trial and testified reluctantly when called as a witness, sat behind Elmarr during his sentencing hearing and left quietly afterward.

Public defender Kristin Johnson asked the judge to appoint her office for a planned appeal.

"This is a tragic situation, clearly, that has torn a family apart for over 20 years," she said during the brief sentencing hearing. "Mr. Elmarr has also proclaimed his innocence for over 20 years and he continues to do this."

According to police and prosecutors, Elmarr and Murphy planned to take a morning motorcycle ride to Left Hand Canyon on May 22, 1987, to share a picnic and have sex.

Prosecutors believe he strangled her to death and cut her throat after they arrived at a site near a trail.

Elmarr was a suspect at the time, but he was not arrested until January 2007 when a re-examination of evidence revealed his DNA in samples taken from Murphy's body.

In the years between Murphy's murder and Elmarr's arrest, Elmarr worked as a volunteer rescuer with the Longmont Emergency Unit, often working alongside Boulder County Sheriff's Office investigators who suspected him of killing Murphy.

Prosecutors argued at trial that a tumultuous divorce and ongoing legal entanglements over the couple's two children motivated Elmarr to kill Murphy.