

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ContraCostaTimes.com

## Tracy man convicted of voluntary manslaughter in Brentwood frog pond killing

By Malaika Fraley  
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 05/27/2009 05:56:29 PM PDT

Updated: 05/27/2009 10:46:17 PM PDT

MARTINEZ — Jurors deliberated for more than eight days before finding a 30-year-old Tracy man guilty Wednesday of voluntary manslaughter for fatally shooting a San Leandro man while hunting for frogs on a levee road in unincorporated Brentwood in 2006.

Jurors said they struggled over conflicting evidence about how Steve Goodmanson, 40, was killed.

The prosecution sought a murder conviction, arguing that Jared Alger struck Goodmanson in the head in a surprise attack and then shot him in the face at close range. The defense argued for acquittal, saying Alger fired in self-defense after Goodmanson pointed the rifle at his head.

"To us, clearly he killed him intentionally," said Goodmanson's ex-wife, Joy O'Meara. "(Goodmanson) has two kids, they knew the person who did this, and he took their father away from them."

Alger was Goodmanson's friend who sometimes lived at Goodmanson's home and worked for his contracting business. Prosecutor Gerald Chang at trial painted Alger as a mentally and emotionally stunted man who viewed Goodmanson as a father figure but never received the respect from Goodmanson for which he yearned. Alger once

dated Goodman's girlfriend and was frustrated over losing her romantic affections and about the state of his relationship with Goodmanson, Chang said.

A group of friends were hunting frogs and varmints in the marsh on Aug. 27, 2006, when Goodmanson had an intense conversation with Alger. Alger was next seen emerging from the darkness carrying Goodmanson's boots and saying, "Goobar's gone fishing."

Alger then forced Goodmanson's distraught girlfriend into the victim's truck and struck her in the head with his gun when she jumped from the moving vehicle, Chang said. Alger was acquitted of kidnapping and felony assault charges related to Goodmanson's girlfriend and instead convicted of lesser charges of false imprisonment and misdemeanor assault.

Defense attorney Elizabeth Barker argued that Alger's strange behavior after the shooting was the result of his own distress from having killed his close friend in self-defense.

"I really think my client acted in self-defense," Barker said after the verdict. "He has no criminal record, and really was one of the nicest clients I have had."

Alger faces more than 20 years in prison when sentenced before Judge John Laettner in July.

Reach Malaika Fraley at [mfraley@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:mfraley@bayareanewsgroup.com).

Advertisement



**End-to-End Training as It Should Be: 100% ONLINE!**

**Earn Your Master Certificate in Internet Marketing**

- SEO & Paid Search
- Online Branding
- Web Analytics
- Internet Law
- Media Buying
- Social Media

→ 1-800-268-9943  
USanFranOnline.com/FD

Print Powered By 