



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK**

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**Gilgo Serial Killer Pleads Guilty to Seven Charged Murders and Also
Admits to the Killing of Karen Vergata**

Heuermann is Expected to be Sentenced to Three Consecutive Sentences of Life Imprisonment Without the Possibility of Parole for Killing Melissa Barthelemy, Megan Waterman, and Amber Costello

Heuermann is Also Expected to be Sentenced to a Consecutive Sentence of 100 Years to Life Imprisonment for Killing Maureen Brainard-Barnes, Jessica Taylor, Sandra Costilla, and Valerie Mack

(SUFFOLK COUNTY, N.Y.) – Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney today announced that Rex A. Heuermann, 62, of Massapequa Park, pleaded guilty to three counts of Murder in the First Degree and four counts of Murder in the Second Degree, for causing the deaths of the seven victims previously referenced by the Indictment, as well as admitting publicly, as part of his allocution, to killing an eighth victim, Karen Vergata.

According to court documents and the defendant’s admissions during his guilty plea allocution, on or about and in between November 19, 1993 and November 20, 1993, the defendant met with Sandra Costilla. After picking up Ms. Costilla, the defendant subsequently strangled her, causing her death. Subsequently, the defendant transported and left the remains of Ms. Costilla in the vicinity of Fish Cove Road, in North Sea, Town of Southampton, Suffolk County, until she was ultimately discovered by hunters on November 20, 1993. At the time of her death, Ms. Costilla was just 28 years old and survived by her son, who was approximately five years old.

In April 1996, Heuermann met with Karen Vergata. After picking up Ms. Vergata, the defendant subsequently strangled her, causing her death. Following her death, Ms. Vergata was dismembered by Heuermann, who then transported her remains to various locations. On April 20, 1996, the severed legs of Ms. Vergata were discovered on Blue Point Beach in the Town of Brookhaven, in Suffolk County. Almost 15 years later, on April 12, 2011, as part of the expanded search of the Gilgo Beach area, Ms. Vergata's skull was recovered on Ocean Parkway, in the vicinity of Tobay Beach. Prior to her identification in 2023 via genetic genealogy, Ms. Vergata had been referred to as "Fire Island Jane Doe." At the time of her death, Ms. Vergata was just 34 years old and left behind two sons.

On or about and between September 1, 2000 and November 19, 2000, Heuermann met with Valerie Mack. After picking up Ms. Mack, the defendant subsequently strangled her, causing her death. Following her death, Ms. Mack was dismembered by Heuermann, who then transported her remains to two locations, i.e., Manorville and Ocean Parkway, Gilgo Beach. On November 19, 2000, three hunters discovered a black plastic bag approximately one mile west of Halsey Manor Road and north of Mill Road in Manorville. Inside, they observed a decapitated set of human remains, which were later identified as those of Valerie Mack. Over 10 years later, on April 4, 2011, as part of the expanded search of the Gilgo Beach area, the skull, hands, and right foot of Valerie Mack were discovered along Ocean Parkway, just east of Gilgo Beach, in Suffolk County. Prior to her identification in 2020 via genetic genealogy, Ms. Mack had been referred to as "Jane Doe #6." At the time of her death, Ms. Mack was just 24 years old and survived by her adoptive parents and her son, whose name was tattooed near her right ankle.

On or about and between July 21, 2003 and July 26, 2003, Heuermann met with Jessica Taylor. After picking up Ms. Taylor, the defendant subsequently strangled her, causing her death. Following her death, Ms. Taylor was dismembered by Heuermann, who then transported her remains to two locations, i.e., Manorville and Ocean Parkway, Gilgo Beach. On July 26, 2003, Ms. Taylor's remains were discovered just west of Halsey Manor Road in Manorville. Notably, the victim's arms, hands, and head had been severed from her body and were missing from the remains recovered at the scene. Nearly eight years later, on March 29, 2011, as part of the expanded search of the Gilgo Beach area, the victim's skull, hands, and forearm were discovered

along Ocean Parkway, just east of Gilgo Beach, in Suffolk County. At the time of her death, Ms. Taylor was just 20 years old and survived by her mother.

In July 2007, after seeing an online advertisement, Heuermann utilized a “burner phone” to arrange to meet with Maureen Brainard-Barnes. On the night of July 9, 2007, Heuermann picked up Ms. Brainard-Barnes and subsequently strangled her, causing her death. Following her death, Heuermann secured the remains of Ms. Brainard-Barnes with three belts and transported the victim to Ocean Parkway, Gilgo Beach. Over three years later, on December 13, 2010, Ms. Brainard-Barnes’ remains were discovered on the north side of Ocean Parkway, near Gilgo Beach. At the time of her death, Ms. Brainard-Barnes was just 25 years old and survived by her two children, her sister and brother, as well as her mother.

On July 10, 2009, after seeing an online advertisement for her services, Heuermann utilized a “burner phone” to arrange to meet with Melissa Barthelemy. That evening, Heuermann picked up Ms. Barthelemy and ultimately strangled her, causing her death. Following her death, Heuermann tied up the remains of Ms. Barthelemy with tape and burlap. Subsequently, the defendant transported the victim’s remains to Ocean Parkway, Gilgo Beach. Over a year later, on December 11, 2010, Ms. Barthelemy’s remains were discovered on the north side of Ocean Parkway, near Gilgo Beach. At the time of her death, Ms. Barthelemy was just 24 years old and survived by her sister, her mother, and stepfather.

On June 6, 2010, Heuermann utilized a “burner phone” to arrange to meet with Megan Waterman. That evening, Heuermann picked up Ms. Waterman from the Holiday Inn in Hauppauge and subsequently strangled the victim, causing her death. Following her death, Heuermann tied up the remains of Ms. Waterman with tape and burlap and then transported the victim’s remains to Ocean Parkway, Gilgo Beach. Just over six months later, on December 13, 2010, Ms. Waterman’s remains were discovered on the north side of Ocean Parkway, near Gilgo Beach. At the time of her death, Ms. Waterman was just 22 years old and survived by her daughter, mother, and grandmother.

Finally, on September 2, 2010, after a “ruse” that occurred the night prior had disrupted Heuermann’s encounter with Ms. Costello, Heuermann utilized a “burner phone” to arrange to once again meet with Amber Costello. That evening, Heuermann picked up Ms. Costello from her residence in West Babylon and subsequently strangled her, causing her death. Following her death, Heuermann tied up the remains of Ms. Costello with tape and burlap and then transported her remains to Ocean Parkway, Gilgo Beach. On December 13, 2010, Ms. Costello’s remains were discovered on the north side of Ocean Parkway, near Gilgo Beach. At the time of her death, Ms. Costello was just 27 years old and survived by her sister.

Following a long-term investigation, the defendant was arrested on July 13, 2023.

Heuermann is due back in court for sentencing on June 17, 2026, where he is expected to be sentenced to three consecutive sentences of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for killing Melissa Barthelemy, Megan Waterman, and Amber Costello. Heuermann is also expected to be sentenced to a consecutive sentence of 100 years to life imprisonment for killing Maureen Brainard-Barnes, Jessica Taylor, Sandra Costilla, and Valerie Mack. In exchange for Heuermann’s admission to the murder of Karen Vergata, this additional murder is covered by Heuermann’s plea to the murders of the seven charged victims.

Heuermann is represented by attorneys Michael J. Brown, Esq., Danielle Coysh, Esq., and Sabato Caponi, Esq.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Nicholas J. Santomartino, Andrew Lee, Michelle Haddad, Lawrence Opisso, and Allen L. Bode, under the leadership and direct supervision of Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney.

The investigation was led by the Gilgo Homicide Task Force, which includes members of the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office, Suffolk County Police Department’s Homicide Squad, New York State Police, Federal Bureau of Investigations, and Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office.

The Gilgo Homicide Task Force also extends its sincere appreciation to the Suffolk County Medical Examiner's Office, the Suffolk County Crime Laboratory, the Identification Section of the Suffolk County Police Department, the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner, Astrea Forensics, Mitotyping Technologies, and the United States Secret Service for their integral assistance in this investigation and prosecution.

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**Criminal complaints and indictments are merely accusatory instruments.
Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty. No one is above the law.**

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