

Sentence Review Division  
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SENTENCE REVIEW DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA

STATE OF MONTANA,	)	Cause No. DC-32-2021-0000016-IN
	)	
-vs-	)	Missoula County District Court
	)	
	)	Montana Fourth Judicial District
COLTON RYAN MERRITT,	)	
	)	<b>DECISION</b>
	)	
Defendant.	)	

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On July 14, 2023, the Defendant was sentenced to Ninety-Five (95) years to the Montana State Prison for the offense of Count I: Deliberate Homicide, a Felony, in violation of §45-5-102[1], MCA. The Defendant was given credit of 922 days for time served.

On August 2, 2024, the Defendant's Application for review of that sentence came on for hearing by Zoom videoconference before the Sentence Review Division of the Montana Supreme Court (hereafter “the Division”). The Defendant appeared from the Saguaro Correctional Facility and was represented by David Merchant, Defense Counsel. The State was represented by Mac Bloom, Deputy County Attorney. The following attendees were present by Zoom but did not give statements: Rhonda & Chris Trickel, victim’s sister and brother in-law; Mike and Ashlee Merritt, victim’s oldest son & daughter -in-law; Matt and Rashelle Merritt, victim’s son & daughter-in-law; Scott Trickel, victim’s nephew; Caitlin and Sam Fletcher, victim’s niece and her husband; and Ronald Merritt, victim’s father. The Defendant gave a statement.

Before hearing the Application, the Defendant was advised that the Division has the authority not only to reduce the sentence or affirm it, but also increase it. The Defendant was further advised that there is no appeal from a decision of the Division. The Defendant acknowledged that he understood this and stated that he wished to proceed.

Rule 12, Rules of the Sentence Review Division of the Supreme Court of Montana, provides that, "The sentence imposed by the District Court is presumed correct. The sentence shall not be reduced or increased unless it is clearly inadequate or clearly excessive." (Section 46-18-904(3), MCA).

The Division finds that the reasons advanced for modification are insufficient to hold that the sentence imposed by the District Court is clearly inadequate or clearly excessive.


Therefore, it is the unanimous decision of the Division that the sentence is AFFIRMED.

DATED this 13th day of August, 2024.

SENTENCE REVIEW DIVISION



Hon. Luke Berger, Chair



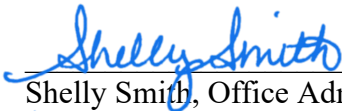
Hon. Jessica Fehr, Member



Hon. Matthew Cuffe, Member

Copies mailed or emailed this 13th day of August, 2024, to:

Clerk of District Court – *via email*  
Colton Ryan Merritt #3034943, Defendant  
Hon. Robert Deschamps – *via email*  
David Merchant, Defense Counsel – *via email*  
Mac W. Bloom, Deputy Co. Attorney – *via email*  
Board of Pardons and Parole – *via email*  
MSP - Records Dept. – *via email*



Shelly Smith, Office Administrator  
Sentence Review Division