

# Couple Sentenced for Abusing, Murdering 5-Year-Old Boy



## Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

*Semper Justitia*

**DATE:** December 13, 2021

**CASE:** Jessica Prater & Adam Caldwell (Case #16FE010948)

**PROSECUTOR:** Supervising Deputy District Attorney Casey Newton,  
Homicide Unit

The Honorable Stephen Acquisto sentenced Jessica Prater and Adam Caldwell each to 25 years to life in prison. On November 4, 2021, a jury convicted Prater of the first-degree murder by torture of Zachary Prater-Stokes, child assault causing death and child abuse with great bodily injury causing death. On October 8, 2021, a jury convicted Caldwell of second-degree murder and child assault causing death.

In April 2016, Jessica Prater and her 5-year-old son Zachary moved into Adam Caldwell's home. Soon thereafter, Caldwell began to punish and abuse Zachary, both psychologically and physically. The physical abuse became more frequent and more violent. The abuse was also inflicted by Prater. On June 2, 2016, Prater called 911 to report that Zachary had swallowed water in the bathtub and was not responsive. Sacramento Metro Fire arrived and found Zachary clothed and dry in a bedroom. Zachary was taken to the hospital, but never regained consciousness and later died. Medical evidence confirmed extensive abuse. The autopsy showed Zachary's death was caused by blunt force injuries and water submersion.