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Melanie Blake Sentenced to Ten Years in Orleans Stabbing Case

On Monday, March 14, Melanie Blake, 37, of Orleans, was sentenced to ten years in state prison for attempted second degree murder and causing great bodily injury. Blake will be required to serve eighty-five percent of her sentence before she is eligible for parole.

Blake was arrested on June 25, 2010, after Sheriff's deputies responded to a 9-1-1 call from a friend of Gabrielle Schleuter, a.k.a Gabrielle Drake, of Orleans, indicating that Schleuter was the victim of multiple stab wounds. When Sheriff's deputies arrived at the scene, Schleuter told them that Melanie Blake attacked her with a knife. The attack, according to Schleuter, occurred at Melanie Blake's residence and started after Blake accused Schleuter of being an informant for law enforcement. When deputies responded to Blake's residence, they forced entry and arrested Blake. Deputies also discovered numerous blood stains, some of which appeared to have been wiped with a cleaning agent.

During the trial, the defendant initially attributed her violent behavior to methamphetamine and alcohol addiction but the circumstances of the case were inconsistent with that defense. On September 23, 2010, on the third day of trial, Blake changed her plea from not guilty to guilty.

"Drug and alcohol use are serious problems," noted Humboldt County District Attorney Paul Gallegos. "But we cannot accept substance abuse and addiction as excuses for behavior that endangers the health and safety of the people in our communities."

Depute District Attorney Ben McLaughlin prosecuted the case and the Honorable W. Bruce Watson presided.