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Travis County District Attorney Margaret Moore today released the following statement:

Today, February 28, 2017, Mark Kenady, aged 56, pled guilty to the 2015 murder of Clarence Gardner and agreed to a forty-five (45) year prison sentence, which was imposed immediately by Judge Karen Sage in the 299th District Court.

Mr. Gardner's body was discovered on a conveyor belt by employees at the Travis County recycling center on April 14, 2015. Police worked quickly to identify Mr. Gardner, who was homeless, and then located the crime scene to discover that he'd been beaten to death with a paving stone, and his body put into a recycling can.

Kenady, who was also homeless, subsequently confessed to police that he killed Mr. Gardner while the victim was asleep under a bush. Kenady was already wanted by police for violating parole conditions after his release from prison for aggravated robbery and aggravated kidnapping.

Prosecutor Mark Pryor said: "We are grateful to the men and women of the Travis County Sheriff's Office who, quite literally, had to wade through a mountain of trash to solve this case. In particular, Detective Sylvia Leal who led the investigation from the beginning and continued to work with our office up until the day of the plea. We hope this sentence demonstrates that the DA's office and local law enforcement will fight to seek justice for every victim of violent crime, regardless of their circumstances."