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July 7, 2023
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #23-30

**Jury Finds Gang Member Guilty of First-Degree Attempted Murder for
Early Morning Shooting on W Lerdo Hwy**
People v. Elijah Jene Sanchez: Kern County Superior Court Case SF021118A

(Bakersfield) – District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a guilty conviction today for an early morning shooting that occurred in Shafter. On June 26, 2023, and July 5, 2023, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Joe L. Alindajao, a Kern County jury convicted Elijah Sanchez of First-Degree Attempted Murder, Assault with a Semi-Automatic Firearm, and Possession of an Unregistered Handgun in a Public Place. The jury also made special findings that Sanchez personally used a firearm resulting in great bodily injury to the victim and possessed an unregistered firearm for the benefit of a criminal gang.

On February 9, 2023, at approximately 9:15 a.m., the victim and his girlfriend were walking between Starbucks and McDonald's on W Lerdo Highway in the City of Shafter. While crossing the street, the victim noticed Sanchez lifting his arms and "banging" on him from across the street. The victim heard Sanchez yelling the word "Baker" while challenging him to a fight. As the victim approached, the verbal altercation escalated and Sanchez lifted his sweater, brandishing a firearm at the victim. The victim, angered by Sanchez's display of the handgun, challenged Sanchez to a fight. Sanchez appeared to be walking away from the altercation when he suddenly turned around and began pursuing the victim while drawing the handgun from his waistband. As the victim ran westbound on West Lerdo Hwy, Sanchez chased the victim and fired several rounds at him. Video surveillance footage from a nearby business showed vehicle traffic passing by both men as Sanchez fired multiple rounds at the victim. Sanchez continued to pursue and fire his gun at the victim causing him to fall to the ground. Sanchez then stood over the victim and continued to fire several additional rounds at him, striking him once in the head. Sanchez then fled the scene and buried the firearm at a nearby location where he was promptly arrested by officers from the Shafter Police Department. The victim was transported to a local hospital where he received life-saving medical treatment over the course of several days.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating, "Gang members that initiate brazen crimes of violence endanger entire communities, and criminal sentences must meet that threat with severe consequences. The law permits life sentences for those that commit a violent crime with a firearm,

and this conviction should ensure that Sanchez spends decades in prison before even being considered for the possibility of release.”

The defendant faces upward of 32 years to life in prison. Sentencing is set for August 9, 2023, in Department 9 of the Kern County Superior Court before the Honorable Kenneth C. Twisselman II.

Elijah Sanchez:

