



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF KERN

CIVIC CENTER JUSTICE BUILDING
1215 TRUXTUN AVENUE
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301
(661) 868-2340, FAX: (661) 868-2700

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

ANDREA S. KOHLER
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:
DDA Cole Sherman
(661) 868-2350

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Spells Found Guilty of Murder Among Other Charges for Senseless Crime Spree
People v. Corey Spells: Kern County Superior Court Case BF187742A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction. On January 5, 2024, a Kern County jury found Corey Spells guilty of the first-degree murder of John Sosa, Jr. The jury also found Spells guilty of robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, grand theft, and other crimes he committed against five other victims during a crime spree stemming from September 9, 2021, to October 21, 2021. This case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Cole Sherman.

On October 3, 2021, Spells walked past the American Ave Car Wash in Bakersfield and observed Sosa Jr. inside one of the open-air carwash ports. Sosa Jr. had been living inside this carport off and on and had a friendly relationship with the business' management. Spells walked past the business but then circled back around and approached Sosa Jr.'s carport. Without any warning or provocation, Spells drew a knife and lethally stabbed Sosa Jr. in his throat. Sosa Jr. was able to walk a short distance away, but then collapsed, succumbing to the injury. Spells immediately fled the scene running away in a southeast direction. Bakersfield Police Department (BPD) Homicide Detectives located video from various businesses in the area that enabled them to track the suspect's path, but the video was not clear enough to identify the suspect.

On October 7, 2021, Spells approached a man who was sitting at a bus stop next to the Valley Plaza mall. Without any warning or prior interaction, Spells hit the man in his face and brandished a large knife at the victim. Scared for his life, the victim pulled out pepper spray and Spells then fled the area on foot. BPD Officers located and detained Spells near White and Hughes Ln. Officers located a ten-inch knife concealed in Spells' jacket pocket. Officers also recognized Spells as the suspect wanted for a smash and grab jewelry theft from JC Penney on September 10, 2021, where thousands of dollars of diamond rings were stolen. The knife was later examined by the Kern Regional Crime Lab and was found to have Sosa Jr.'s DNA on it.

After being arrested on October 7, 2021, but before the DNA results came back tying Spells to the Sosa Jr. murder, Spells was released from custody. On October 21, 2021, Spells snuck up on a woman as she was walking to her vehicle in a parking lot at White Ln and South H St. Spells grabbed onto her purse and eventually yanked it from her grip as he punched her on her head. An employee from a nearby barbershop came to the aid of the woman and then chased after Spells to get her property back. As the barbershop employee caught up, Spells pulled out a large knife and stabbed the man in his back. The barbershop employee was treated for his stab wound at Kern Medical and survived.

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Spells’ senseless and horrifying crimes posed a significant threat to our community. This conviction is a victory, as it shields any others from becoming Spells’ next victim.”

Sentencing is scheduled for February 5, 2024, before the Honorable Kenneth C. Twisselman in Department 9 of the Kern County Superior Court. Spells faces a sentence of up to 30 years to life in prison.

Corey Spells:

