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August 16, 2024
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #24-117

Jury Finds Richard Cortez Guilty of Second-Degree Murder
People v. Richard Cortez: Kern County Superior Court Case BF193727A

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant jury verdict in a homicide case today. On June 18, 2024, a Kern County jury found defendant Richard Cortez, age 33, guilty of the second-degree murder of Joshua Samarripas, with an enhancement for use of a firearm. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Larry L. Fields.

On December 30, 2022, at approximately 8:38pm, KCSO deputies were dispatched to 3320 Center Street in Bakersfield regarding a shooting. Upon arrival, deputies observed the victim in a sitting position in front of 919 Pesante Street. The victim was slumped backwards and was leaning against a vehicle. The victim was initially unresponsive as Deputies located a gunshot wound to the upper right portion of the victim's back. The victim was transported to Kern Medical Center where he later succumbed to his injuries.

Investigators canvassed the area and found video of a Tacoma pickup truck, later determined to be stolen, following the victim and pass him as he walked down the street. The pickup truck stopped in the middle of the road and the driver, Cortez, stepped out, pointed a handgun at the victim, and fired two shots. The victim fled with injury to where he was later discovered by deputies.

Deputies located the pickup truck abandoned and identified evidence linking Cortez to the truck and the murder. Investigation revealed that Cortez and the victim were acquaintances.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating, "These extreme acts of violence committed by felons who illegally possess firearms are a top priority for prosecution. Violence in our streets and neighborhoods will not be tolerated."

The bifurcated proceedings are set for August 19, 2024, in Department 9 of the Kern County Superior Court before the Honorable Judge Kenneth Twisselman. A sentencing date will be set at a later date. Cortez faces a sentence of up to 15 years to life in prison for the murder, plus 25 years to life for the use of a firearm to commit murder.

Richard Cortez:

