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Guilty Trial Verdict for Attempted Killing at the Golden West Casino
People v. Rafael Castro: Kern County Superior Court Case BF195614A

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a ruling in a significant felony case today. On March 17, 2025, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Joseph J. Mendoza, a Kern County jury convicted Rafael Castro of Attempted Voluntary Manslaughter, Assault with a Firearm, Attempted Criminal Threat, Possession of Firearm by Person Prohibited Due to Conviction, and Unlawfully Carrying a Concealed Firearm Within a Vehicle. The jury also found it true that Castro personally used a firearm during the commission of both the Attempted Voluntary Manslaughter and Assault with a Firearm.

On July 15, 2023, Castro entered the Golden West Casino in Bakersfield and proceeded to gamble and consume alcoholic beverages. At approximately 2:00 a.m., Castro was asked by Golden West Casino staff to leave the premises for causing a disturbance. However, Castro refused to leave the casino, and security staff were asked to assist with escorting Castro from the property. Castro immediately became physically combative with security staff. Castro grew increasingly upset and repeatedly threatened the life of one security guard who attempted to escort Castro away from the business. Finally, Castro returned to his vehicle within the casino parking lot.

Upon entering his vehicle, Castro drove over a curb and travelled toward the front of the business where the security guards and multiple other casino patrons were standing. As Castro's vehicle approached the group of people, Castro lowered his front passenger window, slowed down, and pointed a loaded handgun toward the security guard whose life he had just threatened. Once more, Castro threatened the guard's life, before discharging his firearm several times in his direction from within his vehicle. In fear for his life, the guard then pulled out a handgun in his possession and returned fire—striking Castro once. Castro immediately fled the casino in his vehicle.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "This incident, fueled by alcohol, unfolded in a matter of seconds, leaving several shaken. The motive behind this violent act is serious and will not be taken lightly. Our office is committed to pursuing justice until sentencing is fully carried out."

Sentencing is set for April 15, 2025, before the Honorable Judge Tiffany Organ-Bowles in Department 8 of the Kern County Superior Court. Castro faces up to 15 years in prison.

Rafael Castro:

