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Kern Valley State Prison Inmate Convicted of Assault with a Deadly Weapon
People v. Ricardo Mathews: Kern County Superior Court Case DF017461A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a jury trial conviction on a case in which an inmate assaulted another inmate with a slungshot.

On Wednesday April 16, 2025, a Kern County Jury found Ricardo Mathews, age 53, guilty of two felony counts including assault with a deadly weapon and inmate in possession of a weapon. The court later found true that Mathews had prior felony convictions for robbery, intimidating a witness, assault causing great bodily injury, and criminal threats - all falling within the three strikes law. The court also found true that Mathews planned the crimes, used a weapon, engaged in behavior that indicates a serious danger to society, that he has served prior terms in prison, and his prior performance on probation was unsatisfactory, as factors in aggravation. The case was prosecuted by Supervising Deputy District Attorney David McKillop.

On Tuesday November 29, 2022, the control booth officer was releasing inmates from their cells for day room activities at Kern Valley State Prison. Mathews exited his cell and crouched down in a fighting stance with a self-made slungshot in hand next to the inmate victim's cell. A slungshot is a small mass of metal or stone fixed on a flexible handle or strap. When the victim inmate exited his cell, Mathews struck the victim with a slungshot in the face and continued beating him for twenty-eight seconds until officers were able to stop Mathews. The victim suffered a broken nose and lacerations that required sutures.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "The Kern County District Attorney's Office takes acts of violence very seriously. We are committed to holding accountable anyone who unlawfully harms others—regardless of whether the perpetrator is an inmate or not."

Sentencing is scheduled for May 14, 2025, in Department 18 of the Kern County Superior Courthouse before the honorable Judge Zulfa. Mathews was scheduled to be released from prison in the year 2030. He now faces up to an additional 25 years to life in prison.

Ricardo Mathews:

