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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board of Parole Grants Parole to Convicted Murderer Maricruz Galaviz Over the DA's Objection
CDC #W99772; Kern County Court Case #BF107032A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) granted release to convicted murderer Maricruz Galaviz, age 47. On April 17, 2025, BPH found that Galaviz no longer continues to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

On July 14, 2004, Galaviz lured 17-year-old victim Amanda Zubia to a residence on Bernard Street in Bakersfield. Waiting at the residence was Galaviz and her crime partners. Galaviz and her crime partners beat the victim with their hands and feet, whipped her with an extension cord, and burned her with cigarettes. Galaviz cut off the victim's hair, spit in her face, and put a plastic bag down the victim's throat. Galaviz also placed a plastic bag around the victim's face with insect repellent inside the bag. The torture and beating of the victim spanned several hours.

Galaviz then bound and gagged the victim so that Galaviz could get the victim into a large suitcase that she put in the back of her car. The victim died as a result of suffocation. The victim's body was ultimately discovered encased in cement inside a barrel found at an East Bakersfield home. During the execution of the search warrant, detectives found disposable cameras. On those cameras were pictures of individuals participating in the victim's torture.

Galaviz and her crime partners were arrested and prosecuted. On December 2, 2004, Galaviz pled guilty to murder in the first degree. On December 23, 2004, a Kern County Judge sentenced Galaviz to 25 years to life.

Codefendant Antonia Salazar was sentenced to 25 years to life for murder in 2004. However, Salazar died while in custody in 2019. Codefendant Robert Vallejo, also charged with murder, died while in custody in 2004, prior to a case disposition. Codefendant Erika Lasalde served 7 years in prison for assault with a deadly weapon.

At Galaviz's first parole hearing on September 21, 2023, the Kern County District Attorney's Office asked BPH to deny parole for seven years, but BPH only denied Galaviz's parole for three years and stated that her case would be automatically reviewed for a possible new hearing in less than three years.

That new hearing took place on April 17, 2025 where the Board of Parole conducted Galaviz's second parole hearing. Galaviz has served approximately 20 years in prison and was eligible for parole, according to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation records, in 2024. At her hearing, Galaviz admitted her role and motive for the vicious and heinous murder of the victim. The commissioners focused on Galaviz psychological assessment that rated her at low risk of re-offense, her insight into her history of substance abuse and gang activity, institutional behavior, and rehabilitative programming. The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH found that Galaviz was suitable for parole and no longer posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "This murder was one of the most brutal and shocking tragedies our community has ever witnessed. We firmly oppose the Board of Parole's decision, as it not only compromises the safety of our community but also fails to uphold justice for the victim by permitting this premature release."