



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

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

KENNETH M. RUSSELL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

August 29, 2025
MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:
DDA Jordan Houle
(661) 868-2340

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #25-99

Rodrigo Lara Found Guilty of First Degree Murder in the Death of Javier Sanchez
People v. Rodrigo Lara: Kern County Superior Court Case #BF201035A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant murder verdict today relating to the death of 33-year-old Javier Sanchez. On August 28, 2025, a Kern County jury found Rodrigo Lara guilty of first-degree murder, prohibited person in possession of ammunition, conspiracy to commit murder, and gang conspiracy. The jury also found true that Rodrigo Lara committed the murder and conspiracy to commit murder for the benefit of a criminal street gang. This case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Jordan Houle.

The jury was unable to reach a verdict on some charges and enhancements. While the verdict is a clear finding that Lara was, *at minimum*, a part of a gang-related conspiracy to commit the murder, the verdict also reflected an inability of the jury to come to a unanimous verdict that Lara was the person who actually fired the fatal shot that resulted in the victim's death.

On August 25, 2024, Lara traveled on foot to a gathering at the 400 block of Lloyd Street in Bakersfield and concealed himself in a dark portion of the driveway. The victim was also at the gathering. Around 3:00 a.m., the victim walked to his vehicle that was parked in the driveway of the home when gunfire erupted from the darkened portion of the driveway. The victim was struck and succumbed to his injuries. Immediately after the gunfire, Lara fled the scene.

Along Lara's path of travel, the Bakersfield Police Department located Lara's belonging including an empty 9mm magazine, two live rounds of 9mm ammunition, and his shirt covered with Sanchez's blood – all which were found in storm sewers. In addition, video surveillance captured Lara breaking his cell phone over his knee.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "This was a calculated and heinous crime that showed complete disregard for a human life. The District Attorney's Office will not tolerate this violence in our community and will pursue severe consequences for those who pose a danger to public safety."

Sentencing is scheduled for September 30, 2025, before the Honorable J. Eric Bradshaw in Department 5 of the Kern County Superior Court. Rodrigo Lara faces a sentence of up to 55 years to life in prison.

Rodrigo Lara:

