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Michael Castillo Found Guilty of First Degree Murder
People v. Michael Castillo: Kern County Superior Court Case BF190265A

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant murder conviction today. On October 17, 2025, in a case presented by Deputy District Attorney Brad Taconi, a Kern County jury found defendant Michael Castillo guilty of First Degree Murder, Felon in Possession of a Firearm, and Resisting Arrest. Firearm enhancements were also found true. On October 27, 2025, the court found it true that Castillo had suffered two previous strikes. In addition, the court found three factors in aggravation true: that the defendant engaged in behavior that presents a danger to society, that the defendant has suffered numerous previous convictions, and that the defendant has previously served time in prison.

In the late evening hours on May 15, 2022, defendant Castillo and Francisco Rodriguez left an illegal internet casino on North Chester Avenue in Bakersfield. Surveillance footage showed Castillo walking with Mr. Rodriguez down the street to the Tacos La Villa. Once the two were behind the restaurant, Castillo pulled a .40 caliber handgun out and shot Mr. Rodriguez at point blank range. Castillo fled the scene and his residence.

While on the run, Castillo attempted to enlist his neighbors and friends to engage in countersurveillance of undercover officers. The attempts were unsuccessful, and deputies were able to locate Castillo. On May 25, 2022, deputies located Castillo in the 2300 block of North Inyo Street. After obtaining a warrant for his arrest and calling for him to exit the residence, Castillo fled and led deputies on a chase. A canine deputy assisted the Sheriff's Office in apprehending Castillo. A search of the residence produced an AR-15 that Castillo had possessed.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "Despite Castillo's efforts, he could not evade law enforcement or justice. The gravity of his crime ensures consequences he cannot avoid."

Sentencing is scheduled for January 15, 2026 before Superior Court Judge Judith Dulcich in Department 2 of the Kern County Superior Court. Castillo is facing up to 106 years to life in prison.

Michael Castillo:

