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Regalado Convicted of 2nd Degree Murder in the Death of Girlfriend's Cousin
People v. Jaime Regalado: Kern County Superior Court Case BF199183A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant murder conviction. On June 11, 2026, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Brad Taconi, defendant Jaime Regalado Avalos pled no contest to second degree murder.

On the evening of April 25, 2024, Claudia Morales Vasquez became involved in an argument with her cousin Noralina Vasquez Hernandez and her cousin's boyfriend, Jaime Regalado, whom she was visiting. As the argument escalated, the victim called her parents and requested they drive from Northern California to East Bakersfield to pick her up. In the early morning hours of April 26, 2024, prior to the victim's parents' arrival, Regalado turned the argument physical. He grabbed Ms. Vasquez Hernandez by her shirt, pulled her into him, and told his girlfriend to go into their shared bedroom. Regalado threw the victim to the ground and pressed down on her face and neck with his foot. Regalado then carried the victim's limp body out to his vehicle.

Regalado drove the victim's body from East Bakersfield over to an orchard off Stockdale Highway in far West Bakersfield. Her body was discovered by farm workers around 8:15 in the morning. Upon their arrival at the East Bakersfield apartment, the victim's parents found an empty apartment smelling of bleach and cleaning products. They reported the victim as missing. Deputies from the Kern County Sheriff's Office were able to connect the two crime scenes within a matter of minutes and identify Regalado as the primary suspect. Regalado and his girlfriend were located travelling southbound on Interstate 5. Officers with the California Highway Patrol successfully conducted a traffic stop where they identified a blood stain on Regalado's shoe, a jacket covered with the victim's blood, and a blood stain in the vehicle.

An autopsy later revealed that Ms. Morales Vasquez suffered multiple blows to the head, extreme rotation of the head on the neck, compression of the neck and chest, and a pressurization covering of the mouth and nose consistent with the pressure applied by the defendant's foot.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Despite Regalado’s attempts to conceal the crime by disposing of the victim’s body and evading law enforcement, I am grateful for the thorough investigation and successful prosecution that brought him to justice.”

Regalado is scheduled to be sentenced before the Honorable Judge David Zulfa on July 13, 2026, in Department 18 of the Kern County Superior Court where he faces a sentence of 15 years to life in prison.

Jaime Regalado’s girlfriend, Noralina Vasquez Hernandez, admitted to investigators that she cleaned the crime scene following the homicide. On October 14, 2024, Vasquez Hernandez pleaded no contest to one count of Accessory After the Fact. Vasquez Hernandez is scheduled to be sentenced on June 16, 2026, in Department 1 of the Kern County Superior Court.

Jaime Regalado:

