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October 20, 2026
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #26-74

**Fontes Faces Life Sentence Following Guilty Verdict for
1997 Attempted Murder and Sexual Assault**
People v. Michael Fontes: Kern County Superior Court Case BF182486A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant verdict in a case involving Attempted Murder, Kidnapping, and Sexual Assault in Bakersfield, California.

On October 20, 2026, in a case prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Ken Russell, a Kern County jury convicted Michael Allen Fontes, age 53, of the 1997 Attempted Murder, Kidnapping, and Forcible Rape of Cari Anderson following a week of deliberations.

At 7:00am on November 24, 1997, Cari Anderson was found in a dirt field next to the Golder Empire Transit (GET) facility on Golden State Highway by a GET employee. Cari was naked, beaten, and her throat was cut three times. Despite her injuries, Cari survived and was transported to Kern Medical Center. A subsequential examination found that she was suffering from hypothermia, had four broken ribs, a collapsed lung, and had been sexually assaulted. Despite years of exhaustive investigation by Bakersfield Police Department (BPD) detectives, they were unable to identify a suspect and the case went unsolved for over two decades.

In 2019, Sergeant Abshire from the BPD's Cold Case Unit enlisted help from the Oklahoma City FBI Office. Though the use of DNA techniques, law enforcement identified Fontes as the suspect in the assault. Following the new evidence, the BPD arrested Fontes in 2021.

Cari Anderson was a courageous survivor and spoke publicly about the crime committed against her in hopes of bringing her attacker to justice. While Cari lived to hear about the day Fontes was arrested, sadly, she passed away shortly after.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "I met Cari on the day Michael Fontes was arraigned in court in 2021. She passed away just months later, never knowing that the man who brutally assaulted her and left her for dead would likely spend the rest of his life in prison. With this verdict, I hope Cari can finally rest in peace."

Sentencing is set for December 4, 2026, before the Honorable Judge David R. Zulfa in Department 18 of the Kern County Superior Court. Fontes faces up to 38 years to life in prison.

Michael Fontes:

