



CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**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

JAMES D. SIMSON
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

ANDREA S. KOHLER
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

June 14, 2019

MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:
DDA Joseph Kinzel (661) 868-1131

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by JAK
Press Release: #31

Kern County Jury Finds Jeffrey Tapia Guilty of 2nd Degree Murder

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction today. On June 13, 2019, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Joseph Kinzel, a Kern County jury found Jeffrey Tapia guilty of Second-Degree Murder with firearm and gang-related charges.

On May 11, 2016, Benjamin Mendoza was walking in a south Bakersfield neighborhood from a relative's home to his own nearby home. While walking on the corner of Del Mar Drive and Madison Street, a vehicle arrived in the intersection, made a U-turn and stopped, permitting Jeffrey Tapia to immediately exit the vehicle and fire seven shots at Benjamin Mendoza. Mendoza suffered three gunshot wounds to the back and died from the injuries within the hour. Tapia, an active participant of the Eastside Bakers criminal street gang, quickly returned to the vehicle and fled the scene.

Deputies of the Kern County Sheriff's Office located Tapia inside the vehicle used during the murder within the hour. Inside the vehicle, a handgun loaded with ammunition matching that used in the murder was also located. Jeffrey Tapia was found with additional matching ammunition in his pocket.

The murder was investigated by the Kern County Sherriff's Office.

Tapia's sentencing is scheduled for September 20, where he will face a sentence of up to 50 years-to-life.