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November 7, 2019
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by CJZ
Press Release #57

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction in a prison homicide case. On November 4, 2019, a Kern County jury convicted Miguel Crespo of First Degree Murder with a special circumstance of a prior murder conviction and Assault by a Prisoner Serving a Life Sentence. On today's date, November 7, 2019, the same jury returned a verdict for the death penalty. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Richard Choi.

In the evening hours of October 31, 2013, defendant Miguel Crespo alerted the guards at Kern Valley State Prison, Delano, CA, that his cell mate, Carmen Guerrero, was not moving. Guards responded to the cell and found Carmen Guerrero bound and gagged on the top bunk and unresponsive. Defendant Crespo told the first guard who came to investigate that he was going to have to work tonight and that he killed Mr. Guerrero. During the investigation it was discovered that defendant Crespo was upset that he was housed with Carmen Guerrero who was openly transgender, and Crespo admitted killing Guerrero because Guerrero was a homosexual.

At the time of the murder, Mr. Crespo was at Kern Valley State Prison serving a life sentence for murder that occurred in Los Angeles County in 1993. In that case, Mr. Crespo shot into an occupied vehicle striking the two occupants, a male and female, killing the male, and severely injuring the female.

Notified of the death verdict, District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer stated: "We will continue to seek the death penalty on cases in which the killer has previously been convicted of murder and poses a significant risk of death or great bodily injury to staff and inmates in state prison in the future."

The sentencing date is set for December 5, 2019.