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MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Re: Sexual Assault Trial Conviction: People v. Hilario Viruncruz: BF 173639A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction in a sexual assault case today. In a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Samantha Allen, a Kern County jury found defendant Hilario Viruncruz guilty of sexually assaulting and kidnapping a 13-year-old child. Viruncruz was found guilty of felony violations of Penal Code Section 209(b) [kidnapping with intent to commit lewd and lascivious act], as well as Penal Code Section 288(b)(1) [Committing lewd and lascivious act on child with force].

On September 1, 2018, the 13-year-old male victim was walking home from a friend's house when the defendant stopped him and asked him to do some gardening work. The victim accepted, as long as he was permitted to ask his parents for permission first. Viruncruz agreed to take the victim to his parents to ask for permission. Once he had the victim in his vehicle, Viruncruz refused to stop at the victim's home to seek permission from his parents. Viruncruz instead drove the victim to a remote location where homes were still under construction and sexually assaulted the victim. The defendant attempted to give the victim money to facilitate the victim's cooperation. The victim physically fought the defendant and was able to escape. The victim sought safety at the nearest home, where the homeowners helped contact law enforcement and the boy's parents. Law enforcement located the defendant two days later in possession of a cellular phone containing thousands of searches for child pornography.

Advised of the conviction, District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented that "The Special Victims Unit of the District Attorney's Office specializes in the effective prosecution of sexual predators that prey on children. The deplorable actions committed in this case more than justify a lifetime prison sentence with no opportunity at parole."

Viruncruz' sentencing is scheduled for March 11, 2020, where he faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Hilario Viruncruz:

