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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Re: Jury Trial Murder Conviction: William Lee: BF 181306A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced guilty verdict in a murder case today. On July 7, 2021, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney John Allen, Kern County jury found defendant William Lee guilty of second-degree murder, shooting at an occupied building, and firearms related charges and enhancements.

On June 3, 2020, the Bakersfield Police Department responded to the 700 block of Kentucky Street after Bakersfield's ShotSpotter system detected gunfire in the area. Upon arrival, officers found Jerry Tibbs Jr. suffering from a single gunshot wound to the chest. Tibbs was located inside a smoke shop located on the 700 block of Kentucky Street. Tibbs died at the scene. A homicide investigation revealed Jerry Tibbs Jr. worked as security at the smoke shop and affiliated with the Eastside Crips, a criminal street gang. Tibbs, along with other members of the East Side Crips, were in an altercation with defendant William Lee days prior to the June 3 shooting. William Lee was reputedly a dropout gang member from the Country Boy Crips, another Bakersfield-based criminal street gang that is known to rival the Eastside Crips. In the days following the altercation, William Lee obtained a firearm and on June 3rd, 2020, Lee approached the smoke shop and shot five rounds into the glass front door of the shop, directly at Tibbs, with one shot striking Tibbs in the chest, killing him.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating: "The cycle of gang violence that plagues our community and drives up homicide rates is fueled by retaliatory shootings similar what occurred in this case. Gun violence will not be tolerated as a means to settle disputes between current or former gang members. Lee has a long history of violence, and is deserving of the increased sentences that murder and prior strike convictions allow."

The court also found true that Lee had suffered two prior qualifying 'strike' convictions. In light of the murder conviction and Lee's history of prior offenses, he will face more than 50 years to life in prison at his sentencing, which is currently scheduled for August 4, 2021 before the Honorable Judge David Zulfa.