



**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

ANDREA S. KOHLER
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT:
Gina Pearl
(661) 868-2350

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Re: Trial Murder Verdict: Eric Nichols BF 182068A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a verdict in a significant murder prosecution today. On August 24, 2021, a Kern County jury found Eric Nichols guilty of all charges, including two counts of first-degree murder for the August 4, 2020 shooting deaths of Paul Dean and Jerome Davis. The jury also found Nichols guilty of one count of carjacking with a firearm and one count of robbery with a firearm against a separate victim that same day. Further, the jury found Nichols guilty of one additional count of robbery with a firearm against yet another victim on August 2, 2020 - two days before the murders. Nichols was also convicted unlawfully possessing a firearm as he is a convicted felon. Nichols was also found to have suffered a "strike" prior for assault with a firearm. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Gina Pearl.

On August 2, 2020, a female victim was working at Perla Appliances at 4700 Easton Drive in Bakersfield when Nichols approached her, held a gun to her head, and stole several hundred dollars from the business. The robbery was captured on video surveillance, and DNA evidence analyzed by the Kern Regional Crime Lab solidified the identification of Nichols as the robber portrayed in the surveillance.

At approximately 7:00PM on August 4, 2020, a male victim was at the Valero Gas Station on California and Union Avenues in Bakersfield when Nichols approached him and asked for a ride. During the ride, Nichols became aggressive, pointed a gun at the male victim and demanded his keys, wallet and cell phone. The victim was able to provide a detailed description of the defendant to law enforcement.

Approximately three hours later on August 4, 2020, Nichols shot and killed both Paul Dean and Jerome Davis in the intersection of 10th and M Streets in downtown Bakersfield. The shootings happened at 10:48PM and 10:49PM, respectively, as recorded by gunshot detection technology "ShotSpotter." Nichols was driving the vehicle he had carjacked from the male victim earlier in the day. Both Dean and Davis were shot at close range and died almost immediately.

Nichols then fled in the male victim's stolen vehicle to several different locations throughout northeast Bakersfield – as captured by multiple surveillance videos in the area. Nichols was ultimately found two days later, on August 6, 2020, hiding at a motel in Wasco, California. Law enforcement subsequently located the firearm that was traced to the murder of Dean and Davis. The firearm contained Nichols' DNA and ballistics and toolmarks analysis linked the firearm to the murder scene.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction: "Eric Nichols did more damage to more lives in the course of a few days than many other criminals do in a lifetime. Leaving four victims in his wake, Nichols' crime spree took the lives of two and traumatized two more. Anyone convicted of multiple murders are subject to life in prison without the possibility of parole – a sentence that should ensure he cannot threaten Kern County again."

Nichols faces life without the possibility of parole. Sentencing is scheduled for October 7, 2021 before the Honorable John W. Lua.