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PRESS RELEASE

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Trial Conviction for First Degree Murder: Alvaro Cruz: Kern County Superior Court Case Number BF186633A

Bakersfield – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a trial verdict on a significant homicide case today. On June 3, 2022, a Kern County jury found defendant, Alvaro Cruz, guilty of First Degree murder of victim, Narciso Martinez. The jury also found Cruz guilty of discharging a firearm causing death regarding the murder which was committed on a rural property located west of Wasco. This case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Cole Sherman.

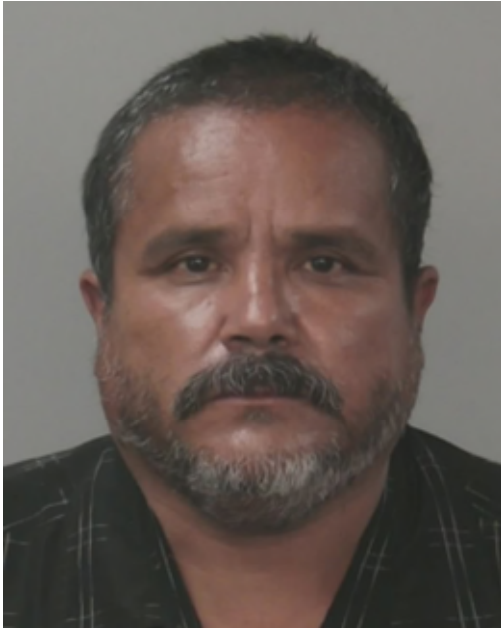
On the morning of June 9, 2021, Narciso Martinez was working at his family's ranch with his cousin and girlfriend. Martinez had previously rented a portion of the property to the defendant, Alvaro Cruz, but a dispute had developed over Cruz' failure to pay rent. On June 9, 2021, Martinez saw Cruz at the property and approached Cruz's location while his cousin and girlfriend waited in a nearby orchard. Martinez yelled at Cruz to leave the property. As Martinez approached the area, Cruz got into his SUV and reversed the vehicle toward Martinez, who stepped to the side to avoid being struck by the vehicle. As Martinez stood next to the driver door, he continued to demand that Cruz to leave the ranch. Rather than immediately leave, Cruz produced a firearm and while still seated in his vehicle, Cruz fired three shots into Martinez's chest and stomach. Martinez took a few steps away before he collapsed to the ground due to his multiple gunshot wounds. Martinez died at the scene, never moving from the location where he collapsed. Cruz then fled the property in his vehicle, crashing through a gate on his way out, and then driving directly through a field as he escaped.

Martinez's cousin and girlfriend called 9-1-1 immediately after witnessing Martinez's murder. Investigation by the Kern County Sheriff's Office yielded eyewitness information, aerial photographs from a KCSO helicopter, DNA evidence, and additional evidence that tied Cruz to the scene of the crime, corroborating eyewitness accounts. Kern County Sheriff's Investigators located Cruz in Corona, CA in July of 2021 and he was arrested and transported back to Kern County to face trial for the murder charges.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating, “The use of firearms in the commission of violent crime drastically increases the likelihood of fatal injury, and the law appropriately provides increased punishment for killers who not only commit murder, but do so with use of a firearm.”

Cruz faces a sentence of up to 50 years to life in prison for the convictions. Sentencing is scheduled for July 14, 2022, before the Honorable Brian M. McNamara.

Alvaro Cruz (Defendant):



Narciso Martinez (Victim):

