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**Murder Convict Sentenced to Additional Life Terms For Repeated Violent Attacks In Prison;
Assaults Judge**

(Bakersfield) Today, District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced multiple jury trial convictions on cases that involved violence by prison inmate Joseph Orta. Orta was initially sentenced to prison for a 2008 murder in Los Angeles County. In 2008, Joseph Orta was living with a cousin and his cousins' wife. Orta had a brief affair with his cousin's wife and then slit her throat, severing both her jugular vein and carotid artery, causing her death. She was found in her van in the parking lot of the Pomona courthouse. Orta's first eligible date for parole on the 2008 murder case is tentatively scheduled in November of 2033.

While serving his murder sentence in state prisons located in Kern County, Orta engaged in a series of violent attacks against other inmates, which resulted in the filing of three felony cases, each of which was tried successively to jury verdict by Deputy District Attorneys Romina Vando and Sarah Merson in the past weeks. Having been convicted on all three cases, sentencing for two of the three cases took place on April 11 for two of the cases, and during the sentencing hearing, Orta assaulted the judge by throwing a book at him, and when subdued, officers found Orta in possession of a razorblade weapon that he had brought into the courtroom.

Case MF012682A: (March 31, 2017 incident)

On March 31, 2017, Orta was serving time on the murder case at the California Correctional Institution, a prison in Tehachapi. Another inmate was waiting in line to receive medication when Joseph Orta attacked him from behind using a razor blade attached to a tongue depressor. Orta used the manufactured weapon to slice the victims face and cheek open, causing extensive, serious injury and permanent scarring. During the trial, Orta testified that he attacked the victim because the victim had tried to hit on him in the past and because Orta believed that the victim was homosexual.

On March 13, 2023, a Kern County jury found Orta guilty of Mayhem, Assault with a deadly weapon by an inmate on another inmate, and possession of a weapon by an inmate. The jury found true Joseph Orta caused great bodily injury on his victim, multiple factors in aggravation were present, and that Orta suffered two prior serious or violent convictions including the prior 2008 murder.

Case DF015517A (October 17, 2019 incident)

On October 17, 2019, Orta was serving his sentence on the 2008 murder case in the Kern Valley State Prison. The victim, also an inmate, was in the dayroom area of the prison when Orta approached him from behind. Armed (again) with an inmate manufactured weapon, Orta stabbed the victim in the neck. Corrections Officers were able to immediately respond and prevent Orta from killing the victim. Orta was also found to have a second razor-blade weapon hidden in his shoe.

On March 16, 2023, Joseph Orta was convicted by a jury for the attack on the inmate at the Kern Valley State Prison. A Kern County jury found Orta guilty of attempted murder, assault with malice by a life prisoner, assault with a deadly weapon by an inmate on another inmate, and possession of a weapon by an inmate.

Case DF016940A (February 27, 2022 incident)

On February 27, 2022, Orta, still serving his murder sentence at the Kern Valley State prison, *again* attacked a victim, another inmate. When Orta's cell door opened, Orta immediately sprinted out of his cell towards the victim, who had his back turned. Orta stabbed the victim in the neck. Orta was quickly detained and subdued before he was able to kill the victim.

On March 29, 2023, Orta was convicted by a Kern County jury for the February 27, 2022 attack on an inmate at Kern Valley State Prison. A Kern County jury found Orta guilty of assault with malice by a life prisoner, assault with a deadly weapon by an inmate on another inmate, and possession of a weapon by an inmate.

Sentencing:

On April 11, 2023, Orta was sentenced on two cases, which involved the 2017 and 2019 incidents described above. During the sentencing, Orta became irate and threw a book across the courtroom at the judge when he did not like what he was hearing from the court, which included the imposition of multiple life sentences. Court security personnel quickly intervened and stopped Orta from committing further violence, while Orta repeatedly yelled expletives and threatened to attack the officers. In the process of stopping Orta from further assaults against the Judge, officers discovered that Orta had concealed and brought a razorblade weapon with him inside the courtroom. The weapon was nearly identical to the weapon Orta had used to attack the inmate in March of 2017.

The judge imposed sentences for the 2017 and 2019 incidents as follows: 27 years to life, plus 25 years to life, plus 25 years to life plus an additional 23 years. All sentences will run consecutive to each other and his current sentence on the murder case. In total, Orta is now required to serve four consecutive life sentences, plus an additional 23 years.

Sentencing for Orta's third case conviction, which relates to the 2022 incident, is scheduled for April 26, 2023, in Department 18 of the Kern County Superior Court, where Orta faces an additional, fifth life sentence.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the series of convictions, stating: "Some people are so persistently violent that preventing their release from custody must be assured by all legal means. Orta is a convicted killer who has only increased his acts of violence while in state prison, and securing multiple, consecutive life-sentences is the best and only means to ensure he cannot endanger communities again. The District Attorney's Prison Crimes Unit prosecutes crimes committed by prison inmates to ensure that

the most violent offenders stay in prison, where they belong.”