



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

6/8/17

**SERIAL ARMED ROBBER FOUND GUILTY OF CONVENIENCE  
STORE HEISTS**

Yesterday in Department 5 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Joseph Kalashian presiding, a Tulare County jury found John Torales, age 27, of Visalia and Farmersville, guilty of armed robbery.

Torales was convicted of six counts of robbery and six counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm, each with gang and firearm enhancements. In charges related to the same case, Torales was found guilty by a jury on August 24, 2016, of two counts each of robbery and assault with a semiautomatic firearm, two counts of criminal conspiracy, one count of masked criminal possession of a firearm in public, and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Each count carried gang and firearm enhancements.

Additionally, Torales was found to possess a strike for robbery in 2008, a serious felony conviction for that robbery, and two prior prison commitments for robbery, burglary, and failure to register as a gang member, and contraband in a jail facility.

Between June 17, 2015 and July 3, 2015, multiple armed robberies of gas stations and convenience stores occurred throughout Tulare County and the southern part of Fresno County. Torales committed 7 robberies and attempted another while his face was covered from the eyes down and a hood sweatshirt was worn over his head in an attempt to conceal his identity. Each robbery occurred in the same manner where he brazenly entered between the hours of midnight and 4:30am, pointed a semiautomatic handgun at the clerks while attempting to conceal his identity, demanded money from the registers, and fled. In most of the robberies the clothing was the same, Torales demeanor and mannerisms were the same, as well as his language.

Extensive collaborative investigation was conducted by the Visalia Police Department along with the Tulare County Sheriff's Department, Lindsay Police Department, Fresno County Sheriff's Department, and Kingsburg Police Department, as well as other agencies. Through these widespread investigative efforts, officers were able to identify distinguishing tattoos on Torales' hands, possible co-partners, and found specific items of clothing utilized in the robberies which all linked Torales to the crimes.

Sentencing is set for July 7, 2017 in Superior Court where Torales faces up to 86 years and 4 months in state prison.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Kirk Davis of the Major Crimes Division and primarily investigated by James Cummings of the Visalia Police Department Violent Crimes Unit.

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