



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

8/14/17

**TULARE MAN CONVICTED OF CARJACKING, KIDNAPPING, AND
ATTEMPTED RAPE**

On Friday, August 11, 2017, in Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Kathryn Montejano presiding, a Tulare County jury convicted Miguel Michael Rodriguez, age 33, of Tulare, of sexual penetration with a foreign object, two counts of forcible oral copulation, kidnapping to commit a sex offense, kidnapping, two counts of kidnapping during a carjacking, second-degree robbery, two counts of assault with intent to commit a forced sex offense, two counts of attempted forcible rape, and two counts of criminal threats. All counts are violent or serious felonies.

The jury also found true special allegations that three of the crimes were done in the commission of aggravated kidnapping. In separate court trial, Judge Montejano found true that Rodriguez suffered a prior strike offense for carjacking with a weapon in 2006.

In the late evening of June 2, 2015, a male and female couple were dining at a Tulare fast food restaurant when Rodriguez sat in the booth beside them. After a conversation between the two, leftover food was offered to Rodriguez, which he declined. The couple then left.

The couple was in their car when Rodriguez approached stating he had a gun, and told them to unlock the doors which they did out of fear. Rodriguez got in the vehicle and told them to drive. Rodriguez took the male victim's cell phone and told him to get in the trunk. Rodriguez then attempted to sexually assault the female. During the assault, the male victim used the escape mechanism in the trunk and attempted to free his companion, however, Rodriguez drove off with her before she could be rescued. Rodriguez took the female to secluded areas and continued the sexual assaults. Once notified, law enforcement was able to locate the vehicle using cell phone pings and the "find my iPhone" app on the cell phone taken from the male victim. Rodriguez was taken into custody by Tulare County Sheriff deputies. The female victim escaped prior to law enforcement's arrival and had been hiding in a tree.

Sentencing is set for September 27, 2017, where Rodriguez faces up to 199 years to life in prison.

The case was prosecuted by Supervising Deputy District Attorney Cindy Underwood and was investigated by the Tulare Police Department and the Tulare County Sheriff's Office.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
Assistant District Attorney Dave Alavezos (559) 636-5494*