



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

1/30/20

**REEDLEY MAN COVICTED OF DOUBLE MURDER, JURY
RECOMMENDS DEATH SENTENCE**

Yesterday in Department 10 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, a jury recommended a sentence of death for Hernan Rodriguez, age 29, for the 2015 murders of two men in a Dinuba orchard.

In the early morning darkness of May 20, 2015, in a plum orchard off Avenue 400 and Road 74 in Dinuba, field workers arrived to begin their day picking fruit in order to avoid the late spring heat. At 9:30 am, the workers took their lunch together seated on the ground while heating up their food in sauce pans with small portable propane heaters around portable coolers.

Rodriguez, who was a co-worker in the orchard, approached the vulnerable victims armed with a highly modified, sawed-off 9mm semi-automatic rifle wrapped in duct tape. He positioned himself behind a van so that he had a strategic vantage point, took a soldier's stance holding his weapon, and fired seven shots in rapid succession at six men seated on the ground. One 57-year-old victim died at the scene from a gunshot wound to his head. A 65-year-old victim was rushed to the hospital, where he lost brain activity after a day, and was taken off life support approximately two weeks later. A 60-year-old victim was shot through the stomach and arm, and miraculously survived multiple surgeries and over three months in the hospital.

Rodriguez immediately fled but was apprehended a short time later by the Dinuba Police Department and the Tulare County Sheriff's Office. A police canine located the gun in the orchard, stuck in the branches of a tree, later that day.

Rodriguez's trial began on October 28, 2019. On January 8, 2020, the jury convicted Rodriguez of two counts of first-degree murder with the special circumstance of multiple murders and the use of a firearm, three counts of attempted murder with the use of a firearm with the special allegation of great bodily injury, and felon in possession of a firearm. On January 13, 2020, the same jury began deliberations in the penalty phase of the trial, culminating in yesterday's recommendation.

Rodriguez possesses a 2008 strike for street terrorism in Fresno County. Sentencing is scheduled for April 17, 2020, in Department 10 of the Tulare County Superior Court.

"The jury's recommendation of death is still legal in California. Voters have continually shown their support of this penalty, including those here in our county," said Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward. "The victims in this case were hard working grandfathers who provided for their families in more ways than one. That their lives ended in an act of workplace violence is a tragedy. We will fully encourage the court to confirm the jury's recommendation at sentencing."

This case was investigated by Sergeant Hector Rodriguez of the Tulare County Sheriff's Office and the Tulare County District Attorney Bureau of Investigations, and was prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Noell Niayesh and Senior Deputy District Attorney Mitch Niayesh.

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