



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Stanislaus County
832 12th Street, Suite 300
Modesto, CA 95354
Mailing address: POB 442, Modesto, CA 95353
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 525-5545

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney
Carol Shipley
Assistant District Attorney
Chief Deputy District Attorneys
Jerry Begen
Alan Cassidy
Dave Harris

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: March 12, 2009
Re: Cesar Melgoza Perez, Conviction for
Premeditated Murder With Gang
Affiliations

For More Information Contact:

Carol Shipley, Assistant District Attorney
Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Cesar Melgoza Perez, age 21, was convicted after a two-month jury trial of premeditated murder, having used a firearm, assault likely to produce great bodily injury, having been armed with a firearm, and having committed both offenses while participating in a criminal street gang. Deputy District Attorney Marlisa Ferreira prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

The case arose out of events that occurred on July 10, 2004, when the defendant, Cesar Melgoza Perez, and seven others in two cars left a party in Modesto to go to a concert in Newman. After stopping at a store in Newman and purchasing some beer, the two cars came across the victim, Joey Neuman, who was drinking a beer and walking his bike toward his home three blocks away.

Perez demanded the driver of the truck he was a passenger in to stop. Perez jumped out of the truck and began fighting with Neuman. The driver of the jeep backed his car into both the victim and the defendant, knocking them both to the ground. The remaining individuals jumped out of their respective vehicles and also began kicking and punching the victim. The victim was overwhelmed by the number of attackers and remained on the ground begging for help. Perez then pulled out a .380 semi-automatic handgun and fired all seven rounds into the victim as he lay on the ground, killing him. The assailants left the scene in the two vehicles. Several days later, five of the seven assailants were arrested. The sixth assailant was arrested two years later and pled to the assault and eventually provided testimony against Mr. Perez. Mr. Perez was located in 2007 in Urupuan, Mexico and was extradited back to California to stand trial. The trial began on January 6, 2009 and ended on March 4, 2009. The jury deliberated for nearly a week before returning verdicts of guilty on First Degree Murder and Assault with force likely to Cause Great Bodily Injury. The special allegations of premeditation and deliberation and gang enhancements along with the use of a firearm were also found true.

The attack was motivated by the fact that Mr. Neuman was wearing red pants, a color associated with the Norteno criminal street gang, and the defendant and his companions were all Surenos.

The matter is scheduled for Friday, March 13 to set a sentencing date.

#