



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) 558-4027

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: April 19, 2011
Re: People v. Enrique Lopez

For More Information Contact:

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

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that **Enrique Lopez**, age 48, formerly of Oakdale, was convicted on April 18, 2011 of **First Degree Murder** and **Felon in Possession of a Firearm** after a week-long jury trial. Chief Deputy District Attorney Jerry Begen prosecuted the case for the People.

On June 14, 1998, at Brennan Park in Oakdale, Lopez and Jose Manuel Duarte argued with the victim, Manuel Arciga Ornelas, age 31, over money Ornelas allegedly owed Duarte. Lopez and Duarte threatened Ornelas and then left the park. A few minutes later, they returned. Lopez, carrying an "Uzi-like" handgun, approached Ornelas who was unarmed and sitting on the grass. Lopez opened fire from a few feet away, hitting Ornelas several times in the head and torso before fleeing the scene. Both Lopez and Duarte left Oakdale that night and drove to Mexico.

Court records show that Duarte was arrested and returned to Stanislaus County in 2005. He was subsequently convicted for his part in the offense in 2007 and is now serving a life sentence in state prison. Lopez was arrested in Mexico in 2009 and brought back in 2010 to face these charges.

The Honorable Linda McFadden, who presided over the six-day trial, scheduled a sentencing hearing for May 15, 2011.

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