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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: April 4, 2022
Re: Darren Joseph Womack
Jury Trial Murder Conviction

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Darren Joseph Womack, age 25, of Modesto has been convicted by a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury of murder and residential burglary with enhancements for personal use of a gun. Deputy District Attorney Tracy Griffin prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On December 14, 2020, victim Lisandro Mendez, age 18, and his two younger brothers were at home in Modesto inside an attached garage that had been converted into their bedroom. At approximately 10:20 p.m., Womack forced his way into the bedroom carrying a loaded firearm. Mendez struggled with Womack over control of the firearm causing Womack to be shot in the right hip. Womack forced Mendez to the ground and shot him in the back, killing him. Womack then fled down a nearby alley. Mendez was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead upon arrival.

Responding Modesto Police officers located Womack's abandoned vehicle crashed into a wooden fence on a nearby street. Blood was smeared throughout the interior and exterior of the driver's door and steering wheel. Video surveillance from a nearby residence showed Womack driving at high speed away from Mendez's residence after the shooting and running from the car after he lost control and hit the fence.

Later that evening, Womack went to Doctor's Medical Center for treatment of his gunshot wound. He was arrested and charged with murder. At the time, Womack was on parole after serving time in state prison for a 2017 robbery. He was released in August and on the streets for only four months before committing this murder.

On March 1, 2022, the case went to trial before Judge Ricardo Cordova. After three weeks of testimony and evidence, the jury returned a verdict convicting Womack of all counts. He faces a maximum possible punishment of approximately 102 years to life in state prison.

Womack returns to court on April 15, 2022 for a court trial on his prior robbery conviction which counts as a "strike" under California's "Three Strikes" law and may be used to increase his sentence if found to be true. A date for sentencing will be set at that time.

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