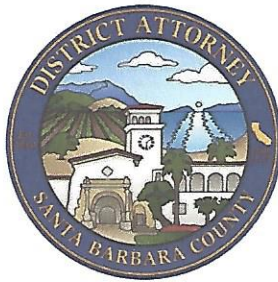


OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 03-348

RELEASE NUMBER

March 7, 2016

RELEASE DATE

Joyce E. Dudley

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Kimberly Siegel, Senior Deputy District Attorney

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

March 7, 2016

Re: *People v. Issac Jimenez and Joseph Castro; Case No. 1430491*

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that in Department 2 of the Santa Barbara Superior Court, Judge Brian E. Hill presiding, Issac Efren Jimenez was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole plus an additional 25 years to life for the use of a gun during the murder of 21-year old Kelly Hunt on February 19, 2013.

This sentence follows a February 2016 verdict wherein a Santa Barbara jury convicted Jimenez and his co-defendant Joseph Castro of first-degree murder. The jury also found the two special circumstances of murder by lying in wait and murder committed for criminal street gang purposes to be true, and found that a firearm was personally and intentionally discharged, causing the death of Kelly Hunt. The jury also found both defendants guilty of conspiracy to commit murder and the gang allegations true as to each charge.

During the murder trial Jimenez and Castro were also charged with attempted murder, after testimony was elicited during trial indicating both defendants were involved in an unsolved shooting two weeks before the homicide. During cross examination by Senior Deputy District Attorney Kimberly Siegel, Castro admitted Jimenez drove him to rival gang territory and provided him a gun to shoot at a group of rival gang members. Shortly after his sentencing hearing, Jimenez pled to attempted murder and received an additional five years in state prison, consecutive to his life without possibility of parole plus the additional 25 years.

District Attorney Dudley stated, "This case is another example of the commitment by Santa Barbara Law Enforcement and the Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office to zealously investigate and prosecute gang crimes in our county. The Santa Barbara Police Department Detectives and the District Attorney staff, led by Senior Deputy District Attorney Kimberly Siegel, worked tirelessly to bring this case to trial, and as a result, these two gang members will be removed from our streets forever.

Castro will be sentenced on April 5, 2016, in Department 2 of the Santa Barbara Superior Court, at which time the attempted murder case against him will also be heard.

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