



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

6/26/20

REEDLEY MAN SENTENCED TO DEATH IN WORKPLACE VIOLENCE MURDERS

Today in Department 20 of the Tulare County Superior Court, South County Justice Center, Reedley man Hernan Rodriguez, 29, was sentenced to death 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 and returned a verdict of death on January 29, 2020.

Rodriguez possesses a 2008 strike for street terrorism in Fresno County.

"The families of the victims have waited for this day. Today, these hard-working grandfathers received justice," said District Attorney Tim Ward. "I know much has been said about the status of the death penalty in our state. Despite the Governor's stance, it is still law. In this case, the decision to seek the ultimate punishment was warranted. These were victims of an act of workplace violence deliberately committed by the defendant. I hope and pray that today is a new step in their families' path towards healing."

With the addition of Rodriguez, fifteen men convicted in Tulare County currently sit on death row.

The 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.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
Public Information Officer Stuart Anderson (559) 636-5494*