



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

8/7/20

**VISALIA GANG MEMBERS SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR
VIOLENT FELONIES**

Today the court sentenced gang member Cesar Raya, 20, to 88 years-to-life in prison for violent crimes committed in 2017. On July 23, 2020, fellow gang member Vincent Lopez-Prado, 22, was sentenced to 92 years, 4 months-to-life for his role in the crimes.

Around 4 am on February 23, 2017, using masks to conceal their faces, the men entered the home of an Exeter couple and stole firearms and ammunition. The homeowners were asleep when the men entered the master bedroom. When they awoke, the men fired two shots, hitting a male victim in the arm. After pointing a gun at a female victim, the pair left.

During the course of the investigation, neighbors of the victims provided their Ring doorbell camera footage to law enforcement. Video of a neighborhood prowler taken shortly before the incident on February 21 was identified as Raya. Exeter Police Department officers executed a search warrant on Raya's residence in Visalia where they found the suspect vehicle, also identified by neighborhood surveillance footage. Raya was taken into custody.

On February 24, the Visalia Police Department responded to an unrelated shots fired call at an apartment complex. During a search, officers found the Exeter victim's guns, ammunition, car keys and house keys located in an apartment determined to belong to Lopez-Prado, who was not present.

In the early morning of February 28, a house in north Visalia was shot at multiple times. Approximately one hour later, Lopez-Prado was involved in a traffic collision in south Visalia. While investigating the incident as a DUI, the California Highway Patrol located a 9mm handgun with a 30 round high-capacity magazine. Forensic testing revealed gunshot residue on Lopez-Prado's hand. Twenty-six shell casings found at the scene of the shooting were matched to the 9mm handgun. Upon further forensic investigation, cell phone data placed Lopez-Prado in Exeter at the time of the February 23 crime.

Raya and Lopez-Prado were tried separately. On January 24, 2020, Raya was found guilty of attempted murder, two counts of first-degree robbery, first-degree burglary, assault with a semi-automatic firearm, with the special allegations of discharging a firearm causing great bodily injury and that the crimes were committed for the benefit of a street gang. On February 7, 2020, Lopez-Prado was found guilty of attempted voluntary manslaughter, two counts of first-degree robbery, first-degree burglary, assault with a semi-automatic firearm, shooting at an occupied dwelling, possessing cocaine while armed with a firearm, attempted transport for sale of cocaine, and driving under the influence of drugs. The charges were enhanced with special allegations that a firearm was discharged and that the crimes were committed for the benefit of a street gang.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Candice Moore of the Major Crimes Division and was investigated by the Exeter Police Department, the Visalia Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol.

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