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NEWS RELEASE

CATHEDRAL CITY GANG MEMBER GETS LIFE IN PRISON

INDIO, CA. – Today, the Honorable Judge James Hawkins sentenced Miguel Valdivia Najera, DOB: 06/18/81, to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

On December 2, 2009, a Riverside County jury convicted Najera of first-degree murder with a special circumstance for committing the murder to further the activities of a criminal street gang.

In May 2006, Najera, a self admitted Cathedral City gang member, was in front of a friend's house bragging about how he was going to kill someone. A vehicle that Najera recognized as belonging to his rival approached the house. Najera moved toward the car with a handgun, but his magazine fell out right before he got close to the car. While the gun was unloaded, Najera realized that the driver was not who he was looking for and told the driver that he was lucky because he had almost been shot. Najera then told the driver to drive him to another house.

The driver complied and took Najera to a house two blocks away. Najera and two other men approached the house and encountered the victim. The victim walked toward the men to see what they wanted. Najera lifted his shirt, grabbed his handgun, and pointed it at the victim. While pointing a gun at the victim, Najera demanded money. Najera stepped in close to the victim taking his wallet, watch and \$10. Najera then lifted his gun to the victim's face and fired one shot. The victim fell to the ground and died of a single gunshot wound to the head.

The case, INF054617, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Victoria Weiss.

"These are the types of cases that the public must become aware of so that gang members are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and justice is served for every member of our community," said Weiss. "When a gang member brutally murders an innocent person for the sole purpose of increasing the reputation of the gang, nothing less than life in prison without the possibility of parole is warranted."

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