



Riverside County District Attorney
NEWS RELEASE

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**RELATIVE OF DEATH ROW INMATE RAYMOND OYLER
CONVICTED OF JURY TAMPERING**

RIVERSIDE – Today, July 14, 2010, Christopher Vaughn Hillman, the brother-in-law of convicted murderer and death row inmate Raymond Lee Oyler, was convicted of seven felony counts of jury tampering.

“The defendant tried to keep his family member from facing the consequences of his horrible actions by attempting to undermine the integrity of our justice system,” Riverside County District Attorney Rod Pacheco said. “Thankfully, the system was not derailed and both he and Raymond Lee Oyler have been held accountable for their crimes.”

In October 2006, Raymond Lee Oyler started the deadly Esperanza Fire in the Cabazon pass burning more than 41,000 acres, destroying 34 residences and killing five U.S. Forest Service firefighters. Oyler was convicted in March 2009 of five counts of special circumstance first-degree murder for the death of each firefighter. He was sentenced to death on June 5, 2009.

During the trial, on or about Feb. 26, 2009, Hillman, now 48, prepared and delivered fliers to vehicles in juror parking lots. The fliers were copies of newspaper articles describing various pre-trial rulings by the judge in the Oyler case which prohibited the defense from introducing certain evidence. The fliers were discovered by three of the jurors in Oyler’s trial during a noon recess and Riverside County sheriff’s deputies located four more fliers on the windshields of other jurors in the case.

The Riverside County District Attorney’s Office began an investigation to determine who was responsible for tampering with the jury in a very significant death penalty case. The investigation narrowed in on Hillman and investigators served a search warrant at his residence. Hillman was not home at that time but later surrendered to law enforcement officers.

Hillman’s trial was held in the Corona courthouse and evidence was presented over four days. Hillman faces up to seven years in prison and is scheduled to return before Judge Larrie Brainard for sentencing on Aug. 20 in Dept. C3 in Corona.

The case, RIF152103, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Tim Cross of the Public Integrity Unit.

“This case was an attack on our justice system,” Cross said. “Jurors have the right to be left alone while doing their civic duty.”

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