



CRIMINAL CASE UPDATE

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INDIO GANG MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR MULTIPLE MURDERS NOW FACES DEATH PENALTY

INDIO, CA: Today, August 26, 2010, Riverside County District Attorney Rod Pacheco decided to seek the death penalty on Elias Carmona Lopez, an Indio gang member responsible for two murders in 2004.

On October 10, 2004, Lopez (DOB: 08/09/86) shot Erineo Perez multiple times in the face and fled the scene. The victim was found deceased sitting in the front seat of his vehicle near Indio City Hall. On October 26, 2004, Lopez shot Martin Garcia multiple times in the face and left his body in an alley. Investigators believe that both of the murders were carried out for the benefit of the criminal street gang to which Lopez belongs.

Although Lopez remained a suspect in both murders, there was insufficient evidence to prove Lopez was the killer until July 2008 when Lopez was charged in the death of Perez and in July of 2010 when Lopez was charged with the death of Garcia. At that time of the filing in Riverside County, Lopez was in custody in an Arizona state prison serving an 8-year sentence on an armed robbery conviction in that state. He was transported back to Riverside County from Arizona in December 2008 where he is in custody and being held without bail.

District Attorney Rod Pacheco made the decision to seek the death penalty upon completion of the death penalty review process. The process includes an invitation to the defendant's defense attorney to make a presentation to the District Attorney, a complete review of the defendant's criminal history and personal history, and a meeting with the victim's family members. Lastly, the District Attorney discusses the facts and circumstances of the case with senior level attorneys, investigators, and victim advocates at the District Attorney's Office before arriving at his final decision.

Lopez is next scheduled to appear in court on September 3, 2010, for a felony settlement conference in Dept. 3S of the Larson Justice Center.

The case, INF062567, is being prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Pete Nolan of the Homicide Unit.

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