



Riverside County District Attorney

CRIMINAL CASE UPDATE

PAUL E. ZELLERBACH
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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John Hall
Senior Public Information Specialist
Contact: 951.955.8662

HEMET MAN FACING THE DEATH PENALTY FOR THE MURDERS OF HIS ESTRANGED WIFE AND HIS 5-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER ORDERED TO STAND TRIAL

MURRIETA – A judge found today, Oct. 17, 2014, that there is enough evidence for a Hemet man to stand trial for the murders nearly a year ago of the defendant's estranged wife and his 5-year-old daughter.

Johnny Lopez, DOB: 12-31-79, is charged with two counts of murder and one count each of attempted murder, rape by force, burglary, and being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. The DA's Office has filed a special circumstance allegation of multiple murders against Lopez. That special circumstance allegation makes Lopez eligible for the death penalty and District Attorney Paul Zellerbach has decided to seek the death penalty against Lopez.

Lopez is charged with the murders of his estranged wife, Joanna Angel Barrientos Lopez, 36, and 5-year-old daughter Mia Lopez. Mia was the step-daughter of Joanna Lopez. The two murder victims were found shot to death in their home on Girard Street in Hemet the evening of Nov. 9, 2013.

Lopez is also charged with the attempted murder of his then-30-year-old girlfriend who was found brutally stabbed and cut by both a knife and an ax in her home on Sunset Lane in Hemet about an hour before the bodies of the two murder victims were located.

At a preliminary hearing held today, Oct. 17, 2014, Superior Court Judge Angel Bermudez heard testimony and found there was enough evidence for Lopez to stand trial on all charges. Lopez now has an information arraignment scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 31, 2014, in Dept. S304 at the Southwest Justice Center in Murrieta.

The case, SWF1303389, is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Burke Strunsky of the DA's Homicide Unit.