



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE
MIKE HESTRIN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

WEBSITE: WWW.RIVCODA.ORG

TWITTER: @RIVCODA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

CONTACT: JOHN HALL
DISTRICT ATTORNEY INFORMATION SPECIALIST
951.955.8662

HEMET MAN CHARGED IN BANNING MURDERS, ASSAULTS

Arraignment scheduled for Thursday morning in Banning

MURRIETA – Today, Sept. 30, 2015, the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office charged a Hemet man with two counts of murder and eight other counts in connection with a series of shootings and attacks in Banning.

James Paul Diaz, DOB: 9-25-81, is charged in case BAF1500894 with two counts of murder with special circumstance allegations of multiple murders and shooting from a vehicle. The special circumstance allegations make Diaz eligible for the death penalty. A determination whether to seek the death penalty against Diaz will be made at a later date by DA Mike Hestrin. Diaz is also charged with two counts of attempted murder, three counts of assault with a deadly weapon, two counts of child endangerment, and one count of vandalism. The DA’s Office also has alleged two prior strike convictions: one conviction in Riverside County in 1998 for shooting at an occupied dwelling and a 2014 conviction in San Diego County for battery inflicting serious bodily injury.

Diaz was scheduled to be arraigned today, Sept. 30, 2015, but was not cleared by the Sheriff’s Department to be transported from county jail to court. His arraignment is now scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. in Dept. B302 at the Banning Justice Center, 311 E. Ramsey St. in Banning.

According to evidence in this case -- and not detailed here in chronological order -- on Sept. 26, 2015, Diaz fired a shotgun at two separate vehicles within minutes of each other in two different locations in Banning resulting in the murders of two men – one in each vehicle. A man who was a passenger in one of the vehicles was also shot and hospitalized. Diaz is charged with assault with a deadly weapon with the injured passenger being the victim.

Another shooting at a third unrelated vehicle occupied by a woman and her two grandchildren resulted in injuries to the woman who was hospitalized. The juveniles in her vehicle were not injured. In this incident, Diaz is charged in this shooting with the attempted murder of the woman and assault with a deadly weapon regarding the two juvenile passengers in her vehicle.

There also was an assault that happened in the parking lot of a mini-mart in Banning in which a man sitting inside his vehicle was attacked and beaten by a man identified as Diaz. The victim was hospitalized and later released. Diaz is charged with the attempted murder of the victim in this attack.

The final incident happened near a church in the nearby city Beaumont where a woman outside of her vehicle was approached by a man later identified as Diaz. The man smashed the windshield of her vehicle as her two young children sat inside. No one was physically injured during that crime. Diaz has been charged with vandalism of the vehicle and child endangerment related to the two children.

Diaz was arrested in Beaumont by officers from that city shortly after the vehicle vandalism.

###