



Riverside County District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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JURY DECIDES DEATH FOR COACHELLA MAN CONVICTED OF TWO 2009 MURDERS

Angel Anthony Esparza was convicted of third 2009 murder earlier this year

INDIO – Today, Aug. 14, 2014, jurors decided that a Coachella man should be put to death for the 2009 murders of two people in Thermal.

Angel Anthony Esparza, DOB: 1-1-84, was convicted on July 31, 2014, for the Dec. 19, 2009, murders of Gregorio Juarez and Pedro Garcia who were found the next day shot in the head, execution style, and their bodies burned in a vineyard at Avenue 58 and Pierce in Thermal.

The jury also found true the special circumstance allegations of multiple murders and murder committed during the commission of a robbery. The same jurors then heard evidence presented during the penalty phase of the death penalty trial and today rendered their verdict of death.

Esparza is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge James Hawkins on Nov. 21, 2014, in Dept. 3R at the Larson Justice Center in Indio.

Esparza was also convicted on April 1, 2014, of a third murder and was sentenced to 75 years to life on May 23, 2014. In that case, on Dec. 3, 2009, Esparza shot and killed a 16-year-old boy, Angel Luna, who had been riding his bicycle in front of the Boys & Girls Club in Coachella.

Initially, all three murders were tried at the same time; however the jury that convicted Esparza of Luna's murder was unable to reach unanimous verdicts in the murders of Juarez and Garcia. The DA's Office retried those two counts before a new jury resulting in these verdicts.

Victims Juarez and Garcia had first been confronted by Esparza at a trailer on Avenue 58 in Thermal and robbed of cash and ATM cards. There were then bound, duct taped, and taken to the vineyard where they were murdered. Esparza was arrested several days later, on Dec. 24, 2014, at a relative's home in San Bernardino.

The case, INF067044, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Jake Silva of the DA's Homicide Unit.