



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fresno Gang Members Sentenced to Life in Prison for the Murder of Albert Lopez

Today, April 24, 2023, Oscar Jose Morales, Jr. (47, of Sanger) and Sabino Palacios, Jr. (44, of Parlier) were sentenced for the first-degree murder of Albert Lopez (45, of Lindsay) as well as other felony charges. Morales was sentenced to a term of Life Without the Possibility of Parole, followed by a term of 25 to Life followed by a term of 5 years determinate. Palacios was sentenced to a term of Life Without the Possibility of Parole followed by a term of 25 years determinate. Today's sentences were handed down by the Honorable Kimberly Gaab in Department 54 of the Fresno Superior Court after a Fresno County jury found Morales and Palacios guilty at a trial that concluded on March 7, 2023.

On January 25, 2020, defendants Oscar Morales and Sabino Palacios traveled from Sanger, CA to Lindsay, CA as part of a plan to rob victim, Albert Lopez. Upon arriving at Lopez' residence with a co-conspirator, both men entered the victim's garage carrying pistols and began to beat the victim while demanding narcotics. When the victim did not comply, Morales shot and killed Lopez and then fled the scene, returning to Sanger. After the robbery conspiracy and murder, Morales then additionally threatened a witness in the case while in custody at Fresno County Jail in March of 2021.

The defendants were arrested in April 2020 by detectives from the Multi-Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium (M.A.G.E.C.) as part of "Operation Southern Bell", a large investigation into criminal street gang activity in Sanger and Selma.

In addition to M.A.G.E.C, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Lindsay Police Department, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, the Fresno Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, the California Department of Justice, the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California assisted in the investigation. The Fresno County District Attorney's Office would like to thank these law enforcement partners for their dedication to this case.

This case successfully prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Robert Veneman-Hughes.

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