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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jurisdictional Hearing Ruling for Provocative Act Murder and Attempted Robbery: JW136143-11: Trayshawn Crowell

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a ruling in a significant felony case.

On June 26, 2023, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Joseph J. Mendoza, the Honorable Judge Wendy Avila found true that Trayshawn Crowell, a known member of a criminal street gang, committed one count of Murder in the Second Degree and one count of Attempted Robbery. These findings of true are the juvenile equivalent to a finding of guilty in an adult criminal case. Crowell was 16 years old at the time the crime was committed.

On November 27, 2019, Crowell entered the N&H Market 2 convenience store in east Bakersfield, armed with a handgun. He was followed by two other accomplices—one of whom was also armed with a handgun. Each of them wore facial coverings. A store clerk was working alone in the market, positioned behind the counter, which was near the store entrance.

Upon entering the store, Crowell pointed his gun in the store clerk's face and began to yell demands. Crowell aggressively reached over the counter, still pointing the gun toward the clerk, who was crouching down and in fear for his life. A second accomplice pointed a "finger gun" toward the clerk. The third accomplice entered the store, pointing a second handgun toward the clerk. Meanwhile, Crowell traversed across the counter area, making his way around to the clerk, who was cornered near the register. At no point did Crowell stop pointing his handgun at the clerk.

In fear for his life, the store clerk then pulled out a handgun in his possession and fired one round toward the third accomplice—striking him in the neck and, ultimately, killing him. Crowell and his second accomplice immediately fled the store. The entire incident occurred within a matter of seconds.

Crowell's dangerous actions naturally induced the store clerk to defend his own life and shoot Crowell's accomplice. For that reason, Crowell was found responsible for his co-conspirator's killing under the Provocative Act Doctrine. The Provocative Act Doctrine holds violent criminals responsible for murder when their own violent acts begin a chain of events that ultimately results in the death of another person.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the result stating; "The violent attempted robbery forced the store clerk to act in self-defense. Even at a young age, Crowell is a member of a criminal street gang and has proven himself to be an extreme threat to public safety."

A juvenile court's jurisdiction ends by the minor's 25th birthday. Absent unusual or extraordinary circumstances, Crowell is expected to be released no later than his 25th birthday, in 5 years. The matter is scheduled for Formal Disposition on July 11, 2023.