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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jonathan Knight Found Guilty of the Murder of 5-Year-Old Kason Guyton
People v. Jonathan Knight: Kern County Superior Court Case BF177850A

(Bakersfield) – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction today. On October 21, 2024, a Kern County Jury returned a verdict of guilty for the First Degree Murder of 5-year-old Kason Guyton that occurred on February 23, 2017. The jury also returned true findings for the special circumstances of Killing by a Street Gang Member and Discharge from a Vehicle. Additionally, the jury found the defendant guilty of seven other charges including three counts of Shooting at an Occupied Vehicle, Attempted Murder, and Assault with a Semi-Automatic Handgun. The case was prosecuted by Chief Trial Deputy Eric Smith.

On February 23, 2017, a vehicle containing a rival gang member in addition to 5-year-old Kason Guyton and Guyton's then 7-year-old brother, was shot repeatedly at the intersection of California Avenue and S Street. The vehicle was struck nine times killing Kason Guyton and severely injuring his brother. Bakersfield Police Department Officers responded to the intersection near S Street and located sixteen spent shell casings in the roadway. Officers reviewed nearby surveillance footage and observed a drive by shooting had occurred. During the investigation, detectives learned of a gang incident that had occurred earlier that day at Valley Plaza Mall leading to the shooting. Through video and interviews, officers were able to identify Westside Crip gang members Jonathan Knight and Jeremy King along with multiple members of the Eastside Crips as being involved. Following the altercation at the mall, Jeremy King acquired a vehicle, drove to pick-up Jonathan Knight, and together they drove the incident location where a rival gang member was known to live. While on scene, Jonathan Knight observed an additional rival gang member, a known Eastside Crip gang member. Following the observation, Jonathan Knight leaned out of the passenger side of the vehicle and fired all 16 available rounds from a handgun.

Jonathan Knight was also convicted of Shooting at an Occupied vehicle and Assault for an incident that occurred on August 17, 2019. At the time of this incident, Bakersfield Police Officers responded to 7421 Remington Avenue on report of a shooting. Review of the home surveillance video showed Jonathan

Knight being provided a firearm by another Westside Crip gang member. Approximately one hour later, Jonathan Knight is standing to the front of the residence as a vehicle drove by. As the vehicle drove by the residence, multiple shots are fired. Jonathan Knight is the first to fire a handgun, ultimately, he is seen in the roadway firing a handgun down the street at the fleeing vehicle. One of the gunshots fired by Jonathan Knight struck the exterior stucco of a residence where a child was sleeping.

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "It is heartbreaking that an innocent child fell victim to the gang violence in our community. I am deeply grateful to Deputy DA Smith, law enforcement, and the jurors for their dedication in seeking justice for young Kason. While his life was tragically taken, an entire community came together to fight for justice in his name."

Sentencing is scheduled for November 19, 2024, in Department 4 of the Kern County Superior Court in front of the Honorable Judge Charles Brehmer. Jonathan Knight faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Jonathan Knight:

