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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Re: Trial Conviction: Rape and Robbery Convictions: William Jack Hopkins SF019655A

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant trial verdict on a significant sexual assault and robbery case today. On Wednesday July 21, 2021, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Brad Taconi, a Kern County jury found defendant William Jack Hopkins guilty of kidnapping to commit rape, forcible rape, assault with the intent to commit sodomy, two counts of robbery, two counts of criminal threats, and felon in possession of a firearm for an incident on June 14, 2019 in Shafter, California. The Jury also found true that Hopkins used a firearm in the commission of the felony offenses and that during the rape he had tied and bound his victim.

The jury also found that on the previous day, June 13, 2019, Hopkins committed an assault with a firearm, attempted to steal a vehicle and other unlawful firearm charges. The jury additionally found that several days later, on June 23, 2019, Hopkins was in possession of a stolen pickup truck and trailer. DDA Brad Taconi presented the evidence resulting in the conviction.

On June 14, 2019, Hopkins approached the two victims who were inside a vehicle in Shafter where the female victim was asleep. Hopkins had a bandana over his face, produced a gun and demanded money. Hopkins woke up the female victim, forced her from the car at gunpoint, and then robbed both the female and an additional male victim of hundreds of dollars.

Hopkins then forced the male victim into the trunk of the car and began walking off with the female victim at gunpoint. The male victim used the emergency escape latch to open the trunk. Hearing this, Hopkins turned around and threatened to kill both victims if the male did not get back into the trunk. The male victim returned to the trunk where he waited until he heard the defendant's truck leave.

Hopkins drove the female victim several miles through orchards, up a canal road, and eventually stopped. Hopkins then tied the woman's wrists behind her back, forcibly raped her, and attempted to sodomize her. After committing the rape, drove the woman to another orchard in Shafter and released her only after telling her he would "skin her" and telling her that he knew where her family was. The woman was located by Shafter Police after she contacted a citizen who was out for his morning run.

DNA evidence analyzed by the Kern Regional Crime Lab was obtained that linked Hopkins to the rape of the woman.

On June 13, 2021, six hours prior to the kidnapping of the female victim, Hopkins was seen breaking into a pickup truck at the Peter's Funeral Home on East Lerdo Highway in Shafter. Two men from the nearby neighborhood approached Hopkins to confront him about the break in. Hopkins produced a firearm – the same gun that would be used in the rape and robbery hours later -- and demanded that the men leave. Hopkins escaped, but not without leaving his fingerprint evidence that connected him to the attempted vehicle theft.

On June 23, 2019, Hopkins crashed a stolen pickup truck and stolen farm trailer in a reservoir in Shafter.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating: "Hopkins is a sexual predator and career criminal who will not be allowed to victimize Kern County again. These convictions should ensure a life sentence and keep Hopkins in prison, where he belongs."

Hopkins faces multiple life sentences as a result of the convictions. Sentencing will be set on September 8, 2021 in front of the Honorable John R. Brownlee.

William Jack Hopkins:

