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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Approved by JAK
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**Re: Trial Conviction: Murder: John Sanchez: Kern County Superior
Court case #BF185060A**

Bakersfield –District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced today that on April 5, 2022 a Kern County Jury found defendant John Sanchez, guilty of second-degree murder along with an allegation that he personally discharged of a firearm in the commission of the murder. Sanchez was also found guilty of an additional charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm, and John Sanchez was found to have a prior strike conviction. The conviction for second-degree murder was the result of the jury guilty finding of second-degree murder as a lesser included offense to the charged first-degree murder, as the jury declined to find that the murder was committed with premeditation and deliberation. The jury also found true multiple circumstances in aggravation in addition to a finding that Sanchez had been convicted of a prior ‘strike’ offense for Criminal Threats in 2016. Deputy District Attorney Stephanie Zigler prosecuted the case.

On March 27, 2021, Deputies with the Kern County Sheriff’s Office responded to the Fastrip convenience store located at 630 Airport Drive regarding shots being fired in the area. Upon arrival, deputies found Jeffrey Correll suffering from a single gunshot wound to his head. Correll died from the wound at the scene. A homicide investigation revealed that Sanchez and Correll were engaged in a verbal road rage altercation. In response to the verbal argument, Sanchez turned his car around, parked near the Fastrip and waited for Correll to arrive. When Correll arrived, Sanchez then exited his vehicle, approached Correll and fired three shots at Correll, with one shot striking Correll in the back of the head, causing his death.

After the murder, Sanchez fled the area, but his escape was short-lived, as officers with the Bakersfield Police Department caught up to him within 10 minutes and effected a traffic stop upon seeing the vehicle and noting it matched the description of the suspect’s vehicle from the reported shooting. Upon Sanchez’ vehicle being stopped by an officer with the Bakersfield Police Department, a handgun was thrown out the driver’s side window of the vehicle. Analysis from the Kern Regional Crime Laboratory provided evidence that the discarded gun was in fact the murder weapon from which the fatal shot was fired.

Additional evidence presented at the trial included a year-long and ultimately unsuccessful effort of Sanchez to repeatedly call and attempt to dissuade a witness, his 15-year-old 'girlfriend' at the time of the murder, who was present in his vehicle during the crime and who could identify Sanchez as the shooter. Sanchez attempted to present a claim of self-defense, which the jury rejected in finding him guilty of second-degree murder.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating: "The value in having a world-class Crime Lab in Kern County cannot be underestimated. The Kern Regional Crime Laboratory has proven vital to solving and bringing justice for the most violent crimes. Equally important is the dedicated work and quick response from law enforcement to crimes of violence. In cases like these, the fast response of law enforcement resulted in identification and apprehension of the perpetrator and yielded the evidence necessary to obtain the conviction."

Sanchez is scheduled to be sentenced on May 3, 2022 by the Honorable Judge Judith Dulcich in Department 2 of the Kern County Superior Court, where he faces a sentence of up to 60 years to life in prison for the offense.

John Sanchez:

