



Porterville Police Department Press Release

Incident: **Search Warrant / Update on Homicide Investigation**

Date/Time: **July 8, 2010**

Summary:

On May 17, 2010, at 4:00 p.m., a homicide occurred in the City of Porterville at the Family Market. The victim, Erick Garcia, was shot and killed by Rafael Gonzalez in front of the market. Jose Gonzalez, Rafael's brother, was with him at the time of shooting. Police Detectives were able to apprehend Rafael and Jose Gonzalez, who have been charged with the murder. In addition, two additional brothers, Juan Gonzalez and Norberto Gonzalez, and an associate, Jacinto Luna, were arrested for accessory to murder after they provided assistance to Rafael and Jose in trying to avoid apprehension and prosecution for the crime.

Porterville Police Detectives have continued in their effort to identify and hold responsible any person assisting Rafael and Jose Gonzalez avoid apprehension and prosecution for the murder. On July 8, 2010, Porterville Special Investigations Unit Detectives, along with Tulare County Probation, and the California Department of Corrections Central Valley Apprehension Team, served a search warrant in Bakersfield, CA. During this investigation, detectives developed evidence that showed Eli Valdovinos aided Rafael when he fled the area to Las Vegas. Valdovinos is a known and documented gang member from Porterville.

Also found during the search of the residence were approximately three ounces of processed marijuana, packaging materials, and other evidence showing Valdovinos was cultivating and selling marijuana from the residence. Detectives also located and seized two assault rifles, seven illegal high capacity magazines, over 600 live rounds of ammunition for the weapons and a .22 caliber handgun. These firearms and related items were determined to belong to Eli Mendez Valdovinos' father, Eli Mendez Valdovinos, Sr.

Eli Mendez Valdovinos, Jr. was transported to Tulare County and booked for Accessory to Murder. Due to jurisdictional issues, a case was submitted to the Kern County District Attorney's Office against Valdovinos, Jr., for charges of Convicted Felon in Possession of a Firearm, Cultivation of Marijuana, and Sales of Marijuana. A case was also submitted against Valdovinos, Sr. for charges of Possession of Prohibited High Capacity Magazines and Possession of Illegal Assault Weapons.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is encouraged to contact the Porterville Police Department's Special Investigations Unit at (559) 782-7400 or (559) 782-7419.

