



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
**COUNTY OF KERN**

CIVIC CENTER JUSTICE BUILDING  
1215 TRUXTUN AVENUE  
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301  
(661) 868-2340, FAX: (661) 868-2700

ANDREA S. KOHLER  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**CONTACT:**

Stephanie Zigler  
(661) 868-2723

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Approved by CJZ  
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**Jury Returns Verdict For Second-Degree Murder  
People v. Fabian Villarreal and Manuel Zamora, BF185617**

(Bakersfield) -- Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction today. In a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Stephanie Zigler, on February 17, 2023, a Kern County jury found Defendant Manuel Zamora guilty of Second-Degree Murder as well as found true an enhancement that the murder was committed by Zamora's personal discharge of a firearm. The jury also found co-defendant Fabian Villarreal not guilty of the charged murder.

On April 7, 2021, defendant Manuel Zamora was outside of his neighbor's house when he came into contact with the victim, Edward Medina. Zamora and Medina engaged in a brief conversation at which point Medina left the residence and went to the corner market. Approximately 7 minutes later, Medina drove back by the residence, presumably on his way home from the market, where he encountered Zamora and Zamora's brother, Fabian Villarreal. Zamora and Villarreal approached Mr. Medina's car, and Zamora opened the driver's side door and shot Mr. Medina one time in his chest. At the time of the shooting, Villarreal was standing next to Zamora.

After shooting Medina, Zamora pulled Medina from the vehicle, dropping him to the ground. Zamora then pulled Medina's body into the backset of his Medina's own truck and Zamora drove Medina's truck to an almond orchard located at South Fairfax and DiGiorgio Roads. It was there that Zamora left Medina's lifeless body.

After leaving Medina's body in the orchard, Zamora ultimately abandoned Medina's truck on the side of a dirt road in the 1700 block of East Planz Road.

A passerby to the shooting called 911 approximately 6 minutes after the shooting occurred. Law enforcement arrived and began circulating the area shortly thereafter but were unable to locate evidence of a crime as Zamora had already taken Medina's body from the scene where the shooting occurred.

For several days Mr. Medina's family did not know where he was. From the family's perspective, Medina went missing suddenly on April 7, 2021; his truck was located April 9, 2021, and his body was finally located on April 12, 2021.

Investigators and criminalists developed evidence that placed Zamora in the truck at the orchards and with Mr. Medina's phone approximately 50 minutes after the shooting. Zamora and Villarreal were located on May 20, 2021, and placed under arrest. Zamora told investigators that he had never met Medina and had never been inside of his truck. Villarreal confirmed to law enforcement officers that he was in fact with Manuel Zamora when Manuel Zamora shot and killed Mr. Medina.

At trial, Manuel Zamora claimed that he was acting in self-defense. The murder verdict makes clear that the jury rejected Zamora's claims of self-defense.

Fabian Villarreal was charged as an aider/abettor to the murder, but the jury's acquittal of Villarreal establishes the jury's conclusion that there the evidence did not prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Villarreal committed the required actions with the necessary intent to result in a murder conviction as an aider/abettor to Zamora.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating; "When clear evidence exists to prove a defendant committed a murder, a common defense tactic seeks to place blame on the deceased victim with false claims of self-defense. Homicide investigations focus on providing juries the evidence they need to refute any false claims presented by defendants at trial."

Zamora faces up to 60 years to life in prison as a result of the conviction. Sentencing is scheduled in front of the Honorable Judge Brian McNamara on April 12, 2023.

Manuel Zamora:

