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**Phoenix Man Convicted of Four Cartel-Related Murders that Left Three Men
Shot to Death, Set on Fire in Residential Neighborhood in Middle of Day**
A fourth man was discovered shot to death in Fontana; killers recorded him dying.

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 33-year-old Phoenix man has been convicted of murdering four men in a failed attempt to take over the drug business that left three of the men shot to death, their bodies set on fire inside of a burning car left abandoned in a residential neighborhood in Orange in the middle of the day in 2015. The body of a fourth man was found inside of a car in Fontana six days after he was shot to death; his killers recorded his dying moments on a cell phone.

Raul Gastellum Flores, 33, of Phoenix, was convicted by a jury Monday of four felony counts of first-degree murder, four special circumstances of murder during the commission of a robbery, and four special circumstances of multiple murders.

He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. He is scheduled to be sentenced July 19, 2024.

Two other defendants charged in connection with the murders remain wanted on warrants, a third, Rosario Adan Roman-Lopez, who orchestrated the hit, is believed to have been murdered in Mexico in retribution for the murders, and a fourth was a cooperating witness.

Rosario Roman-Lopez is accused of orchestrating the murders in retaliation for Edgar and Joel Berrelleza's decision to cut him out of their drug dealing business run by the Sinaloa Cartel. Flores was recruited by Roman-Lopez to help carry out the murders, traveling from Phoenix, Arizona to Orange County with several handguns and Ak-47s to steal tens of thousands of dollars from the Berrelleza brothers, and to murder them if they refused to pay.

On November 9, 2015, Orange police were called to a burning SUV on Oakmont Street just after 2 p.m. Bystanders were attempting to put out the fire with a garden hose. After the firefighters extinguished the fire, officers discovered two men deceased in the back seat and a third man deceased in the front passenger seat. All three men had been shot multiple times. Fernando Meza had his hands bound and he had also been stabbed several times. Edgar Berrelleza had been shot in the head and the back and Antonio Medina had been shot in the head.

Surveillance video captured the SUV on fire as the driver jumped from the vehicle before it slowly rolled to a stop. The driver got into a waiting sedan and left the burning vehicle with the three bodies inside.

Earlier that day Raul Flores and several accomplices went to an apartment in Orange where they intercepted Medina, Meza, and Edgar Berrelleza, by holding them up at gunpoint and forcing their way into the car. Raul Flores and two other gunmen held the three men hostage while waiting for orders from Roman-Lopez. Flores called Roman-Lopez who told Flores he knew what needed to be done. Meza and Medina were shot multiple times in the head and chest, while Flores drove the SUV. Edgar was then shot in the head and back multiple times. After the murders, the other accomplices exited the SUV and got into another vehicle. Flores continued to drive the stolen SUV with the three bodies inside until he reached Oakmont Street in Orange, where he set the car on fire, causing the car to catch fire while he was still behind the wheel. He jumped from the moving vehicle as it continued to burn with the bodies inside and escaped to the waiting sedan. Meza was still alive when the fire was started and soot was found in his lungs. He later died as a result of the gunshot wounds and fire.

Flores then went to an apartment in Orange where Roman-Lopez and other accomplices had kidnapped and tied up Joel Berrelleza, Edgar's brother. Roman-Lopez and other accomplices stole safes, money, and over \$60,000 worth of heroin from the apartment. Flores and another accomplice forced Joel Berrelleza into his Pontiac where he was shot three times as they drove and recorded his dying breaths on a cell phone. His body was left inside his vehicle in Fontana for six days until a passerby called police to report a man had been sleeping inside the vehicle for several days.

"These murders were calculated to inflict the maximum amount of terror not only on their victims, but also on the neighbors and first responders who had to witness the absolute horror that was unleashed on their neighborhood," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "This was someone who took absolute pleasure in carrying out these killings."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Harris Siddiq of the Homicide Unit is prosecuting this case.

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