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DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Date: July 22, 2024
Case #: 06HF0272

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Fugitive Who Fled to Mexico After Shooting Man to Death at Costa Mesa Quinceañera in 2006 Extradited Back to the U.S. to Face Murder Charges

**Efforts by Costa Mesa Police Department, U.S. Department of Justice, and
Orange County District Attorney's Office helped track murder suspect down
18 years after he fled the United States.**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A wanted murder suspect has been extradited to the United States 18 years after he fled to Mexico following a deadly shooting at a Costa Mesa quinceañera in 2006.

For the last 18 years, the Costa Mesa Police Department has been searching for Pedro Gallegos-Garcia in connection with the death of Hermes Rodriguez-Raya.

On February 11, 2006, officers from the Costa Mesa Police Department responded to a report of shots fired at an apartment in the 2000 block of Wallace Avenue in Costa Mesa. Responding officers found the victim with a gunshot wound to the back, lying in a nearby driveway.

During the investigation, officers determined that Rodriguez-Raya had gotten in a fight with another person during the celebration. Gallegos-Garcia is accused of intervening in the fight by pointing a gun at Rodriguez-Raya and firing at him, but the gun did not fire. Gallegos-Garcia is then seen shooting Rodriguez-Raya in the back as he tried to run away. Rodriguez-Raya was killed.

Investigators learned that shortly after the deadly shooting Gallegos-Garcia fled to Mexico in an attempt to avoid prosecution. Gallegos-Garcia has been charged with one felony count of murder and one felony enhancement of the personal discharge of a firearm causing death. He faces a maximum sentence of 50 years to life in state

prison if convicted on all counts.

In August 2019, after 13 years of tireless work by the Costa Mesa Police Department following up on leads on Gallegos-Garcia's whereabouts, a Provisional Arrest Warrant for Pedro Gallegos Garcia was issued in Mexico after the Orange County District Attorney's Office obtained approval from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, Department of State, and the Mexican Embassy.

With the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigations local fugitive task forces and foreign Legal Attache office and the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, which worked with Mexican law enforcement, Gallegos-Garcia was successfully located. On January 22, 2024, Gallegos-Garcia was arrested on the arrest warrant that was issued in 2019.

The formal extradition request was formally presented to Mexico on March 11, 2024. Pedro Gallegos-Garcia's extradition was granted on May 9, 2024, and became final on July 8, 2024. On Thursday, July 18, 2024, Gallegos-Garcia was extradited from Mexico by the FBI and into the custody of Costa Mesa Police Department at John Wayne Airport.

Gallegos-Garcia is scheduled to be arraigned on Monday, July 22, 2024 in Department CJ 1.

"The investigation and apprehension of this wanted person demonstrates our organization's tenacity and dedication to ensure justice for members of our community," said Costa Mesa Police Chief Ron Lawrence. "The victim in this case was a son and a brother. He had family and friends and he was our community member. I am proud of our detectives who worked this case in the beginning as well as the detectives that kept working this case until Gallegos-Garcia was captured and arrested. I am grateful for the partnership with the District Attorney, the Department of Justice, and the FBI for their part in getting justice for the victim's family."

"Justice in this case was delayed but ultimately not denied for the family of Hermes Rodriguez-Raya, who've waited nearly two decades for his accused killer to be returned to the United States to face prosecution," said Akil Davis, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office. "The FBI's fugitive task forces are proud to assist local police departments by working with our Mexican counterparts to return fugitives who flee south of the border in an attempt to evade capture."

"No one is above the law and no matter how hard a wanted killer tries to evade the long arm of the law, justice will be carried out," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "The men and women who have dedicated themselves to solving crime and holding killers accountable will not rest until they have their man. Nearly two decades of unwavering detective work has resulted in the apprehension of a wanted murderer and as a result of the collaborative efforts of the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, the FBI, the Costa Mesa Police Department, and the Mexican authorities, the loved ones of Hermes Rodriguez-Raya can finally have their day in court."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Nick Thomo of the Homicide Unit is prosecuting this case.

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