



## **NEWS RELEASE**

## **United States Attorney's Office** Central District of California

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### **FINAL DEFENDANT IN WEST MYRTLE STREET GANG CASE CONVICTED OF FEDERAL RACKETEERING CHARGES**

The eleventh member of a Santa Ana street gang indicted on federal racketeering charges was convicted today of violating the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute, as well as conspiring to commit the murder of rival gang members to further the gang's criminal enterprise.

Francisco Rodriguez, 22, of Santa Ana, was found guilty by a federal jury in Santa Ana following a six-week trial. The jury convicted Rodriguez of conspiring to violate the RICO Act and conspiring to commit murder of rival gang members in aid of racketeering (VICAR).

As a result of today's conviction, Rodriguez faces a potential sentence of life in federal prison, where there is no parole. United States District Judge James V. Selna is scheduled to sentence Rodriguez on July 30.

Rodriguez was a member of the West Myrtle street gang that operated in Santa Ana. Rodriguez and his co-defendants were involved in various crimes designed to extend the power of the gang. Those acts included distributing narcotics, engaging in extortion of other drug dealers operating on the gang's claimed turf, and plotting to kill rivals who dared to attack members of their gang.

The other 10 defendants named in the indictment previously pleaded guilty to a RICO offense. Those defendants are:

- Octavio Valenzuela, 36, the leader of West Myrtle, who is scheduled to be sentenced on June 18;

- Eddie Armenta, 25, who is scheduled to be sentenced on June 11;
- Rogelio Cardenas, 23, who is scheduled to be sentenced on June 18;
- Juan Holguin, 22, who is scheduled to be sentenced on June 11;
- Francisco Amaya, 22, who is scheduled to be sentenced on June 25;
- Mario Jimenez, 22, who is scheduled to be sentenced on May 21;
- Manuel Torres, 29, who is scheduled to be sentenced on May 21;
- Arnulfo Torres, 30 , who was sentenced to 41 months in prison;
- Jaime Flores, 22, who is scheduled to be sentenced next Monday; and
- Jose Garcia, 35 who is scheduled to be sentenced on May 31.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Santa Ana Gang Task Force, which is made up of Detectives from the Santa Ana Police Department and Special Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

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