



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIVISION

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Gang member convicted of murdering Deputy Escalante

LOS ANGELES – A jury deliberated less than a day before finding the third of six defendants guilty of the first-degree murder of off-duty Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Juan Abel Escalante in 2008.

The jury of eight men and four women also found Jose Renteria, now 22, guilty of the attempted murder of another man in 2007. Jurors found true a special circumstance that Renteria committed the murder to further a criminal street gang along with all gun and gang allegations. Prosecutors were not seeking the death penalty again Renteria.

Deputy District Attorneys Phillip Stirling and John Colello of the Crimes Against Peace Officers Section (CAPOS) of the District Attorney's Office prosecuted the case.

The deputy was gunned down outside his Cypress Park home as he was preparing to leave for his morning shift at Men's Central Jail on Aug. 2, 2008. Prosecutors said Renteria and five co-defendants believed the victim was a rival gang member.

The shooter, Carlos Velasquez, pleaded guilty to one count of first-degree murder and one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and admitted that he personally fired a handgun that killed the victim. He was sentenced in October to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Renteria returns March 4 for sentencing by Superior Court Judge Ronald S. Coen. He faces life in prison without the possibility of parole plus an additional 65 years to life in prison for his conviction of attempted murder.

The prosecution of co-defendants Armando Albarran and Roberto Salazar is still pending.

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