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NEWS RELEASE

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Aug. 29, 2014

Guilty Verdict Reached in Lancaster Ranch Killings

A ranch hand has been found guilty of two murders at a plastic surgeon's ranch in Lancaster, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Deputy District Attorney Michael Blake said Antonio Martínez, 51, was found guilty yesterday of the 2006 murder of 64-year-old Dr. Esfandiar "Steve" Kadivar and the 2007 murder of Efrain Martines in case MA039342.

The jury also found true the special circumstance allegations of murder for financial gain, lying in wait and multiple murders pertaining to the killings of victims Kadivar and Martines.

The alleged mastermind, Nicolas Cordoba, 63, also was found guilty of Efrain Martines' murder. Jurors found true the special circumstance allegations of lying in wait and murder for financial gain, pertaining to Martines' killing.

Both defendants face life in prison without the possibility of parole at sentencing. The hearing is scheduled for Sept. 26 in Department 106 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

Kadivar, who had medical offices in Palmdale, had a 200-acre ranch raising alfalfa and pistachios. Cordoba lived on the property and orchestrated the killings, according to trial testimony.

On July 5, 2006, co-defendants Antonio Martínez and Arturo Rosales Verdín shot the doctor with a high powered rifle as he fed his animals, according to the prosecutor.

Cordoba negotiated a lease of the ranch after the doctor's murder and brought in victim Martines to help finance the lease, according to witness testimony.

The following year, Cordoba had a falling out with Martines and then hired Marco Antonio García, 38, to kill him for \$5,000, witnesses said.

On April 28, 2007, García shot Martines with an SKS assault rifle while he worked at the ranch. Antonio Martínez and Verdín helped García carry out the murder and orchestrate the removal of the victim's remains from the property to a location where he was found a few days later, several miles away, the prosecutor added.

García pleaded guilty to the murder of Efrain Martines on June 4. His sentencing is scheduled on Sept. 5.

Jury selection for the fourth co-defendant, Verdín, 47, is scheduled to begin on Sept. 15. He also is charged with the murders of Kadivar and Martines.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Homicide Bureau.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.