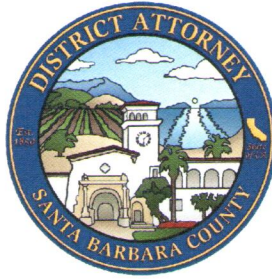


OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 11-329

RELEASE NUMBER

November 13, 2015

RELEASE DATE

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Mary Barron, Senior Deputy District Attorney

CONTACT PERSON (805) 568-2312

* * * * * PRESS RELEASE * * * * *

November 13, 2015

RE: People v. Juan Carlos Herrera-Romero and Gabino Andres Romero, Case Number 1447092

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that on November 12, 2015 co-defendants Juan Carlos Herrera-Romero and Gabino Andres Romero were each sentenced to life in prison for the July 16, 2014 sexual assault of a woman on East Beach in Santa Barbara. In handing down the sentence, the Honorable Rick S. Brown cited the aggravated nature of the offenses which involved the sexual assault of a 62-year-old homeless woman while her 70-year-old partner was restrained.

In September 2015, two juries in Santa Barbara returned guilty verdicts against Juan Carlos Herrera-Romero, age 31, and Gabino Andres Romero, age 28. Two juries were required to meet state and federal constitutional requirements. One jury convicted Herrera-Romero of four felony charges including conspiracy to commit rape, rape in concert, forcible rape, and forcible oral copulation in concert. The Herrera-Romero jury also found that he personally used a knife in the commission of the sexual assault.

The second jury convicted Gabino Andres Romero of four felony counts as well, including rape in concert, forcible rape, forcible oral copulation in concert, and criminal threats against the sexual assault victim's companion. The Gabino Andres Romero jury additionally found that he personally used a knife during the commission of the sexual assault and criminal threats.

The use of a knife during the commission of a forcible sex crime made each defendant eligible for a life sentence under California's One Strike Law. Herrera-Romero was sentenced to 45 years to life in state prison. Gabino Andres Romero was sentenced to 36 years to life in state prison.

"Because these defendants chose exceptionally fragile victims, this case was extremely difficult to both investigate and prosecute" stated District Attorney Joyce Dudley. "Were it not for the extraordinary efforts made by officers and detectives from the Santa Barbara Police Department and Senior Deputy District Attorney Mary Barron, these perpetrators would have gotten away with a vicious sexual and physical assault. Instead, this sentence will ensure that these dangerous men will never again be able to prey upon anyone."

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□ SANTA BARBARA OFFICE
1112 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2300
Fax: (805) 568-2453

□ SANTA MARIA OFFICE
Santa Maria, CA 93454
312-D East Cook Street
(805) 346-7540
Fax: (805) 346-7588

□ LOMPOC OFFICE
115 Civic Center Plaza
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-7760
Fax: (805) 737-7732