

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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District Attorney



06-742

RELEASE NUMBER

June 21, 2024

RELEASE DATE

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

Re: People v. Walter Alexander Morales Jr., Santa Barbara Superior Court Case No. 19CR08880

District Attorney John Savrnoch announced on June 20, 2024, that 31-year-old Walter Alexander Morales, Jr. was sentenced to 25 years to life in state prison by Honorable Judge Denise Hippach in Santa Maria. The defendant pled guilty on June 13, 2024, to First Degree Murder, along with enhancements for committing the murder for the benefit of a criminal street gang and intentionally discharging a firearm causing death.

The sentencing brings closure after a five-year battle for justice for the family of 22-year-old Marlon Brumfield, a United States Army soldier who was fatally shot on September 8, 2019, while visiting family in Lompoc. Mr. Brumfield had been on leave and was set to reenlist in Colorado to continue serving our country. Members of Mr. Brumfield's family, Lompoc Police Department, local Army recruiters, and the community gathered in court to share impact statements, support, and be present for the conclusion of a case that deeply affected many for so long.

On September 8, 2019, Morales was the passenger in a vehicle driven by his co-defendant, Francisco Gutierrez Ortega, aged 29. Believing Mr. Brumfield to be a member of a rival gang, Morales instructed Gutierrez Ortega to confront him as he and his friend crossed Ocean and A Streets. Despite Mr. Brumfield and his friend asserting they were not affiliated with any gang, Morales fired four shots from the vehicle, fatally wounding Mr. Brumfield. Morales fled to Mexico shortly after the incident and returned to the area in July 2020, continuing a pattern of violent behavior until his arrest by the SWAT team that were dispatched to his home.

Gutierrez Ortega previously entered a guilty plea Voluntary Manslaughter and faces an 11-year prison sentence for his involvement.

Deputy District Attorney Jordan Lockey led the prosecution, conveying deep gratitude for the unwavering dedication and tireless collective efforts of the Lompoc Police Department, led by the leadership of Corporal Michael Miller. Their relentless pursuit of justice for Mr. Brumfield's family and their commitment to ensuring the safety of the Lompoc community have been truly commendable.

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