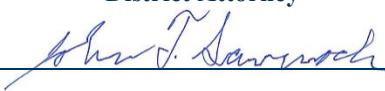


OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOHN T. SAVRNOCH
District Attorney



12-818

RELEASE NUMBER

December 12, 2025

RELEASE DATE

Nicholas Harmon, Deputy District Attorney

CONTACT NAME

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

Santa Maria Man Convicted of First-Degree Murder in 2021 Gang-Related Shooting

Re: People v. Alfredo Junior Alaniz
Santa Barbara County Superior Court Case No. 21CR04149

SANTA MARIA, Calif., December 12, 2025 - Santa Barbara County District Attorney John Savrnoch announced today that Alfredo Junior Alaniz, a 25-year-old resident of Santa Maria, was convicted by a jury of First-Degree Murder (Penal Code §187). The jury also found true the special allegations that he committed the crime for the benefit of a criminal street gang, and that he personally used a firearm and personally discharged a firearm causing death.

In the early morning hours of May 16, 2021, Alfredo Alaniz, a Santa Maria gang member, shot Mario Merino Gonzalez 16 times, 15 times in the back, on North Lincoln Street in Santa Maria. At the time of his death, Mario Merino Gonzalez was 19 years old.

District Attorney John T. Savrnoch stated: "This case involved the senseless and brutal killing of a young man. I want to thank the jury for their service. I also want to thank the Santa Maria Police Department for their tireless work in investigating this case, especially Santa Maria Police Detectives Ryan Preast and Joshua Yee. Their efforts made today's verdict possible."

Sentencing is scheduled for January 13, 2026, in Santa Barbara Superior Court, Santa Maria Division, Department 6. Mr. Alaniz faces a maximum sentence of 50 years to life in state prison.

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