Pismo Beach Police Department

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: Thursday, August 3, 2023
Time: 1:00 PM

Homicide in Pismo Beach: Suspects Apprehended Following Thorough Investigation

Pismo Beach, CA – Details: On Saturday, February 18th, 2023, at approximately 11:47 pm, the Pismo Beach Police Department received numerous 911 calls regarding a shooting that occurred in the pier promenade area of downtown Pismo Beach. Officers responded and located the victim, Gustavo Aquino (41) of Fresno, with multiple gunshot wounds in the parking lot. Mr. Aquino was ultimately transported to Marian Hospital, where he succumbed to injuries due to this senseless act of violence.

The Pismo Beach Police Department, in collaboration with the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office Investigators, worked diligently to investigate the case and bring justice to the victim and his family. The following investigation was exhaustive, with dedicated officers and investigators working tirelessly to gather evidence and interview witnesses. Their unwavering commitment to justice led to the identification and subsequent arrest of the 15-year-old male suspect from Hanford, California.

The investigation revealed that on February 18th, Mr. Aquino was approached by three Hispanic males, identified as Daniel Jacob Santillana (19 years old) and two Hispanic male juveniles, all of whom are members or associates with a criminal street gang in Hanford, CA. The three males challenged Mr. Aquino in a verbal altercation. During the verbal altercation, one of the male juveniles (15) retrieved a firearm from a vehicle parked in the pier parking lot. The male juvenile returned to the scene of the verbal altercation and fired three rounds at Mr. Aquino, striking him multiple times. The three males and two female juveniles fled to the vehicle from where the shooter retrieved the firearm and drove away from the scene. The vehicle's driver was identified as Anthony Robert Hernandez (19) of Delano, CA.

Investigators served approximately 30 search warrants authorizing searches of persons, residences, electronic devices, third-party service providers, and social media services to gather evidence in this investigation. Investigators interviewed numerous witnesses throughout the investigation. Investigators reviewed hours of the City of Pismo Beach video surveillance camera system covering the pier and promenade areas, which recorded the incident, and surveillance footage from surrounding areas. Pismo Beach Police Department Detectives and San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office Investigators were assisted by members of the Kings County

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Major Crimes Unit, Hanford Police Department, Lemoore Police Department, Delano Police Department, and Kern County District Attorney's Office Investigators in the service of search warrants, collection of evidence, and identification of the involved individuals.

The 15-year-old male shooting suspect was discovered to be on active probation out of Kings County, and a probation violation warrant had been previously requested for his arrest. On Friday, May 19th, 2023, he was arrested by Hanford Police Department on unrelated charges and a probation violation warrant. He is currently in the custody of the Kings County Juvenile Center, awaiting proceedings on those charges.

The second male juvenile involved in the initial altercation was also found to be on active probation and reported as a runaway juvenile. A probation violation warrant was issued through Kings County Juvenile Probation. On Friday, May 26th, 2023, this second male juvenile was arrested by Corcoran Police Department, with the assistance of the Kings County Sheriff's Office, on unrelated charges and a probation violation warrant. He is also in the custody of the Kings County Juvenile Center, awaiting proceedings on those charges.

On Monday, July 24, 2023, the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office completed its review of the investigation, filed the following charges, and obtained arrest warrants for the following suspects for their roles in this senseless act of violence:

Male Juvenile (15) – PC 187 - Homicide, PC 186.22(a) – Active Gang Participation, No Bail

Daniel Jacob Santillana (19) – PC 245(b) – Assault with a firearm and PC 186.22(b) – Commission of a felony in association with a street gang. Bail has been set at $90,0000.

Anthony Robert Hernandez (19) – PC 32 – Accessory to the commission of a felony. Bail has been set at $20,000.

The Pismo Beach Police Department recognizes the valuable support and assistance our law enforcement partners provide. As this investigation elapsed over multiple counties, the Pismo Beach Police Department received assistance from the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office Investigators, Kings County Major Crimes Unit, Hanford Police Department, Lemoore Police Department, Delano Police Department, and Kern County District Attorney's Office Investigators throughout the investigation. Their expertise and collaboration were instrumental in bringing this case to a resolution.

Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, specific details and circumstances surrounding the incident are not being released at this time. The Pismo Beach Police Department assures the public that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure a fair and thorough legal process.

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The safety and security of the Pismo Beach community remain a top priority for the Police Department, and they continue to work diligently to maintain peace and support residents.

On August 3, 2023 at 10:49 AM hours, Anthony Robert Hernandez of Delano, CA was arrested and booked into the Kern County Jail on the warrant for his arrest. Daniel Jacob Santillana of Hanford, CA, was found to be in the custody of the Kings County Sheriff's Office Jail for an unrelated arrest and is pending transfer to the San Luis Obispo County Jail. The male juvenile of Hanford, CA, was found to be in the custody of the Kings County Juvenile Detention Center for an unrelated arrest and is pending transfer to the San Luis Obispo County Jail.

Anyone with additional information related to the incident is urged to come forward and assist in the ongoing investigation. Community members can contact the Pismo Beach Police Department at 805-773-2208.

Photos attached:



Anthony Robert Hernandez



Daniel Jacob Santillana

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