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MAN CONVICTED OF TWO SEPARATE HOMICIDES

Dionicio Gutierrez-Salazar, 38, of Atwater, was found guilty by a Merced County jury of two counts of first-degree murder with special circumstances on Friday June 2, announced District Attorney Larry D. Morse II.

On February 19, 2013, Mr. Gutierrez-Salazar and two other men went to the home of Ramon Jimenez with the intent of robbing him. The encounter ended with Jimenez getting shot in the back of the head while sitting on his bed next to his estranged wife. His wife was not harmed. Mr. Gutierrez-Salazar eluded apprehension until he was arrested in 2015 during the investigation of the murder of Carlos Humberto Franco-Herrera.

In early September of 2015, Franco-Herrera was brutally murdered by Mr. Gutierrez-Salazar when he stabbed him at least 43 times. During the course of the murder, Mr. Gutierrez-Salazar directed his two roommates to photograph the stabbing with his cell phone as they watched. The next day, with the help of his two roommates, Mr. Gutierrez-Salazar took the body of the victim to an orchard where it was lit on fire, all while he continued to take pictures.

“A very dangerous man has been taken off of our streets for good,” said Deputy District Attorney Travis Colby. Colby prosecuted the 2015 murder, while Supervising Deputy District Attorney Nicole Silveira prosecuted the 2013 murder.

Gutierrez-Salazar will be sentenced for both murders on July 20 and faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.