



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff

November 12, 2021

News Release

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Detectives Arrest Brothers for April 2021 Homicide of a Farm Worker

Homicide detectives with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office have arrested 30 year old Victor Cerna and 32 year old Vincent Cerna. The two brothers are from Reedley. They are in custody in the Fresno County Jail, each facing a murder charge with bails set at \$4.5 million.

It was around 7:30 am on April 16, 2021 when the Fresno County Sheriff's Office received a report of shots fired in a vineyard. Deputies responded to the field located near S. Butte and W. Chandler Ave., northwest of Huron. There they found a man shot to death. He was later identified as Jose Mendez Varela, 19 years old of Coalinga. Two other men who suffered multiple gunshot wounds were transported to the hospital and would survive their injuries.

The victims were working, pruning grape vines along with two other men, Victor and Vincent Cerna. The group got into an argument and the Cerna brothers pulled out guns and began shooting, striking three men. Victor and Vincent Cerna fled in a car.

Detectives developed information about the gunmen, but were unable to locate them. A break in the case came in June. Police in Mexico contacted the San Diego County Sheriff's Office to notify them they had taken two Americans, Victor and Vincent Cerna, into custody in Mexico City for drug offenses. Deputies in San Diego checked records on the Cerna brothers and learned they were wanted in Fresno County on murder charges. Detectives assigned to the United States Marshals Service Pacific Southwest Regional Fugitive Task Force worked with authorities in Mexico to have both Cerna men transported to the Los Angeles County Jail on November 1st. Four days later they were transferred into the Fresno County Jail.

Anyone with additional information on Vincent or Victor Cerna is asked to contact Detective Jesse Gloria at 559-600-8217 or Valley Crime Stoppers at 559-498-7867, www.valleycrimestoppers.org You will remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward.