



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
**C O U N T Y O F K E R N**

CIVIC CENTER JUSTICE BUILDING  
1215 TRUXTUN AVENUE  
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301  
(661) 868-2340, FAX: (661) 868-2700

ANDREA S. KOHLER  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A. KINZEL  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**CONTACT:**

DDA Gina Nargie  
(661) 868-2340  
DDA David McKillop  
(661) 868-2330

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Parole Denied for Convicted Murderer Mario Morales**  
*CDCR #J27204; Kern County Court Case #SC057848A*

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) denied release to convicted murderer Mario Morales, age 50. On June 13, 2024, BPH found that Morales continued to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

On March 13, 1994, law enforcement responded to San Joaquin Hospital in Bakersfield after receiving a report that victim Alejandro Herrera had suffered massive trauma to the back of his head and was not expected to survive his injuries. As part of the investigation, law enforcement contacted the victim's girlfriend who told law enforcement that an anonymous caller told her, "Your boyfriend is dead. He is in a hospital." Ultimately, on March 15, 1994, the victim died in the hospital. The autopsy revealed that his skull had been fractured down and through to the sinus cavity. Alejandro Herrera died of blunt force trauma because of multiple blows to the head.

On March 17, 1994, Morales was arrested and questioned after witnesses reported that Morales had bragged about committing the crime. During police questioning, Morales admitted that he struck the victim in the head with a baseball bat and the victim collapsed to the floor. When the victim tried to get up, Morales punched him and "stomped" his head. When asked about the motive for the crime, Morales admitted that they wanted to rob the victim of money and drugs. Morales said he was high on "crank" at the time of the murder.

On June 3, 1994, Morales pled guilty to murder in the first degree. On June 28, 1994, a Kern County Judge sentenced Morales to 25 years to life in state prison.

On June 13, 2024, the BPH conducted Morales' fifth opportunity at a parole hearing. At the parole hearing, the commissioners focused on Morales' insight into the murder, gang involvement in the

community, and rehabilitative programming. The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH found that Morales was not suitable for parole and posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society. The BPH has the option of denying an inmate parole for a period of 15, 10, 7, 5 or 3 years. Morales's commissioners issued a three-year denial. As such, Morales' next parole hearing date could potentially be in 18 months.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; "Morales' lack of respect for human life has rightfully cost him his freedom and now he must live the consequences of the pain he inflicted."