

JEFFREY S. ROSELL
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



**OFFICE OF
THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ**

Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street, Room 200
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2400
dao@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

Website

<http://datinternet.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/>

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Contact: Charlie Baum (831) 454-2400

DEFENDANT FOUND GUILTY OF MURDER AND ATTEMPTED MURDER

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced today that a jury has convicted Jose Luis Ramos, for his role in the murder of Santiago Avalos and attempted murder of Maria Elena Rocha. Ramos was convicted of murder in the first degree, attempted murder, and shooting into an occupied vehicle. Assistant District Attorney Charlie Baum prosecuted the case.

On December 12, 2016, the defendant approached his ex-wife, Maria Elena Rocha, and her friend Santiago Avalos as they were sitting in a car. The defendant pulled out a gun and shot Santiago Avalos twice and then turned the gun on Maria Rocha and shot her three times. Mr. Avalos was declared dead at the scene, Ms. Rocha miraculously survived the multiple gunshot wounds and testified at trial.

Ramos faces life in prison as a result of the jury's verdict. District Attorney Rosell said "My condolences are with the family of Santiago Avalos. I want to praise the courage of Maria Elena Rocha for testifying at trial and facing the man who stalked and shot her in court." Baum stated, "The conviction of Mr. Ramos would not have been possible without the coordinated investigation of the Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office Inspectors and the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office."