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SUSPECT ARRESTED FOR ROLE IN 2008 COLD CASE HOMICIDE, 2011 ATTEMPTED MURDER

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced today that Jorge Trujillo Rodriguez has been charged for his role in the 2008 murder of Leonardo Barajas, and an unrelated attempted murder in 2011.

On October 3, 2008, Barajas was stabbed to death outside of a party at the Clifford Manor Apartment complex in the city of Watsonville. Officers and Detectives from the Watsonville Police Department quickly responded to the scene and began working the case. Despite their efforts, the case went cold due to lack of cooperation by many of the witnesses.

Inspectors and prosecutors from the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office continued to work collaboratively with Investigators from the Watsonville Police Department to follow new leads and information. The investigative team was able to obtain key evidence showing the role that Rodriguez played, not only in the 2008 homicide, but in a 2011 attempted murder, as well. It was determined that both of these incidents were gang motivated.

Rodriguez initially appeared in Santa Cruz Superior Court on August 28, 2019 is currently scheduled to be arraigned on September 18, 2019. These cases will be prosecuted by ADA Johanna Schonfield and ADA Conor McCormick.