

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

**JOYCE E. DUDLEY**  
District Attorney



DA 11-210

RELEASE NUMBER

November 5, 2013

RELEASE DATE

*Joyce E. Dudley*

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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**\* \* \* \* \* P R E S S   R E L E A S E \* \* \* \* \***

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that a jury found 26-year-old Charles Alonzo Owens of Lompoc, guilty of all charges and enhancements including first degree murder committed for criminal street gang purposes and the special allegation of intentionally using a firearm. The jury also found Owens guilty of corporal injury to a cohabitant, attempted forcible oral copulation, forcible sodomy, forcible rape, and witness intimidation committed for criminal street gang purposes.

On June 11, 2007, Michael Spradling was shot in the alley just outside his home around 11:00 p.m. Two days later, he died from the gunshot wounds. The investigation eventually went cold. In 2011, Lompoc Police Sgt. Chip Arias took over the cold case and renewed the investigative efforts. He interviewed numerous witnesses, putting together a case that could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt against Charles Owens. Investigative techniques on the murder also uncovered that Owens was beating and sexually assaulting his girlfriend.

Lompoc Police Officers arrested Owens on December 29, 2011, and charged him with the murder of Michael Spradling with the special circumstances of a killing by a street gang member and the special allegation of intentionally using a firearm causing death.

In late April 2012, Owens' girlfriend came forward to disclose the physical, mental, and sexual abuse she suffered during their 8-month relationship in 2011. In May 2012, Owens was charged with corporal injury on cohabitant, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, attempted forcible oral copulation, and intimidation of a witness in furtherance of a criminal street gang.

The cases were consolidated and the jury trial began on October 21, 2013.

District Attorney Dudley commends the Lompoc Police Department Detectives, Santa Maria Police Department Gang Detective Scott Casey, and Senior Deputy District Attorney Ann Bramsen for their outstanding work on this investigation and prosecution, without which this murder may have remained unsolved and the brutal sexual assault of Owens' prior girlfriend would likely have gone unreported. Dudley stated, "As a result of these verdicts a violent murderer, sex offender, and gang member will remain incarcerated for life."

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