

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

CASTROVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR FIRING AT AN OCCUPIED TAXI CAB

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Robert Ruiz Escobar, age 22, a resident of Castroville, has been sentenced to 5 years in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for shooting at an occupied vehicle.

On October 16, 2016, around 1:20 a.m., a fight broke out in front of the Britannia Arms bar located on Alvarado Street in Monterey. The fight abruptly stopped when shots rang out, causing the people involved in the fight and the surrounding bar patrons to flee the area. Due to the scattering crowd, Monterey Police Department officers on scene were unable to pinpoint the location of the shooter, however, a security guard from the Britannia Arms was able to provide the officers with the license plate number of the shooter's car. After running a records check of the license plate number through the Department of Motor Vehicles, the officers learned that the car was registered to Robert Escobar.

A surveillance video that was recovered from the Britannia Arms shows Escobar and his twin brother being confronted by several males as they approach the bar. At first, the conversation between the parties seems peaceful, but then, suddenly, one of the men punches Escobar's brother in the face and a fight breaks out. Escobar can be seen pulling himself free from the melee and running towards his car that was parked along Alvarado Street. Once at his car, Escobar retrieves a gun from inside, and then runs back towards the fight where his brother is still being fought by several men. When he reaches the fight, Escobar fires a single shot into the group, allowing his twin to break free, and he and his brother then run back towards the car. As Escobar runs back, he fires two more shots at the group of fleeing males.

A taxi cab, which was occupied by a taxi driver was the only thing struck during the shooting.

Today, Judge Pamela L. Butler sentenced Escobar to 5 years in prison for his crime. While handing down the sentence, Judge Butler told Escobar that firing a gun into a crowded area is not acceptable, even if his goal was to protect his brother. Escobar's crime is considered a "strike" offense under California's Three Strikes Law.

This case was investigated by Detective Bryan Kruse and several other members of the Peninsula Regional Violence and Narcotics Team. The Peninsula Regional Violence and Narcotics Team is a multi-agency team comprised of officers from several Monterey County police forces and is dedicated to protecting Peninsula from gang violence and narcotic trafficking.