

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

SEASIDE WOMEN FOUND GUILTY OF THE ATTEMPTED MURDERS OF FOUR PEOPLE, ARSON, ELDER ABUSE, ASSAULT, STALKING, AND ARMED ROBBERY

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Robin Duffy, Deputy District Attorney
(831) 755-5412

Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Seaside residents Jennifer Vasquez, age 35, and Victoria Ramirez, age 20, were found guilty by jury of four counts of attempted murder, arson of an inhabited structure, elder abuse likely to cause death or great bodily injury, and armed robbery. The jury further found the defendants committed the attempted murders with premeditation and deliberation and found that they used an accelerant to fuel the fire. In addition, Jennifer Vasquez was convicted of assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury, stalking, stalking in violation of a restraining order, and violating a restraining order.

In 2014 or 2015, Vasquez began dating a Seaside resident who lived with his mother and grandmother at a residence on Hilby Avenue. The off-and-on relationship became volatile. Starting in approximately December 2015, during an “off” period, Vasquez began a pattern of showing up at the house in the middle of the night, screaming at the boyfriend’s mother and grandmother, causing property damage, and threatening the family. The grandmother, an elderly woman confined to a wheelchair, sought a restraining order in April 2016, but Vasquez’s conduct escalated. In April 2017, Vasquez again came to the house uninvited, and threatened to burn the house down. She specifically threatened that “the bitch in the wheelchair is going to get it.”

On July 24, 2017, the ex-boyfriend was having an intimate moment with a new partner on the lawn of the Hilby Avenue residence. Vasquez and Ramirez appeared in the middle of the night, and Ramirez acted as a lookout while Vasquez beat the woman with her fists and then a beer bottle. The woman and the ex-boyfriend managed to escape and fled to the house for safety. Once inside, the mother called 911. Vasquez and Ramirez then began to break every single window save one on the first floor, starting in the living room and going in a clockwise direction. Seaside police responded, took the report, and cleared the scene.

Within 15 minutes after officers left the house, Vasquez and Ramirez returned to the residence. There were four people inside: the wheelchair-bound grandmother, the mother, the ex-boyfriend, and his new partner. Vasquez and Ramirez then poured gasoline around a large portion of the perimeter and lit the house on fire. The only wheelchair accessible exit was the front door, which the defendants lit on fire. The ex-boyfriend was able to put out the fire, preventing the home from going up in flames.

Approximately one month later, on August 31, 2017, Vasquez and Ramirez committed an armed robbery. The victim was asleep in his RV in a church parking lot when they came to his door and asked for money. He said no and closed the door. Minutes later, they returned with a male suspect. The man removed a firearm from his waistband, pointed it at the victim, and demanded money. The man told the victim that he would not hesitate to shoot him because he had “just put one down on Sonoma Street.” The victim believed he was about to die and turned over the only item of value in his possession, his cell phone.

The male suspect remains unidentified, and the firearm has never been located.

These cases were investigated by Officer Jonathan Moore, Detective Matthew Hoffman, and Detective Kevin Miller of the Seaside Police Department, and District Attorney Investigator Erik Morris. Seaside Fire Chief and Arson Investigator Troy Leist and domestic violence expert Tara McCabe provided critical testimony at trial.

The defendants will be sentenced on February 21, 2019 by the Honorable Mark E. Hood. The convictions carry a sentence of life in prison.

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