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## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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### **SALINAS MAN CONVICTED OF PREMEDITATED ATTEMPTED MURDER AND ARMED ROBBERY RECEIVES 45 YEARS TO LIFE**

*People v. Mark Philip Morris; Case No. SS170353A*

SALINAS, California- Monterey County District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni announced today that 27-year-old Mark P. Morris was sentenced to a determinate term of 5 years consecutive to an indeterminate term of 40 years to life. In November 2018, a jury convicted Mark Morris of willful and premeditated attempted murder using a firearm, including robbery at gunpoint, shooting at an inhabited dwelling causing great bodily injury, intimidation of witnesses and possession of a firearm and ammunition as a felon.

On January 3, 2017 at approximately 7:35 in the evening, Morris walked into Quality Market located at 201 Williams Road with a blue bandana covering his face. He wore a beanie and a hoodie covering his head. Upon entering Quality Market, Morris pulled out a large revolver and pointed it at the owner of the store, 63-year old Michael Filice. He then demanded that Filice empty the registers, give him the money and not to "try anything." Morris waived the gun at the female clerk, Rosa Dozal, and threatened to kill both Dozal and Filice. Morris took approximately \$1000 in cash and walked out of the store.

After walking out of the store, Morris waited for Filice outside, hiding behind a partition. Filice followed, carrying a semi-automatic handgun. Immediately upon seeing Filice, Morris fired at Filice twice, intending to kill him. Morris then fled, with Filice running after him on E. Market Street. A shootout ensued, with Morris firing back at Filice several times and Filice returning fire.

One of the rounds fired by Morris pierced through a residential trailer located at 228 Williams Road where Raul Rodriguez lived with his wife and two young daughters. As Rodriguez watched TV, one of Morris's fired rounds struck Mr. Rodriguez's shoulder, fractured his bones and exited his armpit, penetrating the opposite wall of the residence.

Within minutes of the robbery, Salinas Police Department (SPD) officers responded to Quality Market. One of the store clerks who witnessed the robbery found a single car key on a key fob that Morris dropped while he was robbing the store. An SPD officer conducted a “sweep” of the area and located a gray 2002 Toyota Camry parked around the corner from the store. The car was registered to Morris’ mother. Apparently because Morris dropped his key during the robbery, he could not use his getaway car.

SPD detectives searched the car and found a backpack, several white cloth gloves and a two boxes of American Eagle brand .44 magnum ammunition, as well as Sig Sauer brand ammunition, both designed for a revolver. The detectives also found a black beanie, grey on the inside, which matched the beanie worn by the robber in the surveillance. Additionally, the detectives located paystubs in Morris’s name with his address. Morris’s right thumbprint was found on the American Eagle brand box of ammunition.

Monterey County Probation officers conducted a probation search of Morris’s residence. During the search, they found several white cloth gloves in Morris’s bedroom drawer. The white cloth gloves matched the white gloves located inside the car, as well as the white gloves worn by Morris during the robbery.

The next day, Morris called SPD and left voicemails, reporting his car stolen. At trial, he testified that all the items in his car were his and that he used them for work. Morris further admitted that he drove the car. However, he denied that he was the robber.

Morris and his sister testified that they lied about the car being stolen. They told the jury that Morris’s sister took the car with two other males, implying that the other males committed the crimes. DNA mixtures matching Morris and two to three other males were found on the beanie, ski mask and the gloves.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducted an analysis of Morris’s cell phone records. The records showed that his phone was used near Quality Market 13 minutes after the crime. Morris explained that by telling the jury that he went to look for his car near Quality Market after his sister informed him that she had taken the car.

Judge Carrie M. Panetta pronounced Morris’ sentence today.