



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MURDER AND RELATED CHARGES FILED AGAINST JOSEPH ESPINOZA FOR LAST WEEK'S CRIME SPREE AND SHOOTING DEATH OF NICHOLAS KAULS IN FIG GARDEN NEIGHBORHOOD

Joseph Antonio Espinoza (22, of Fresno) has been charged in an Amended Felony Complaint with additional charges for last Sunday night's shooting death of teenager Nicholas Kauls in Fresno's Fig Garden Neighborhood, the Fresno County District Attorney's Office has announced.

Last week, Joseph Espinoza was arrested on assault charges stemming from an incident that occurred on June 26th. A Felony Complaint was filed related to those charges, and Mr. Espinoza remained in custody at the Fresno County Jail. An ongoing investigation by the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, the Fresno Police Department, and the Fresno County District Attorney's Office into the string of attempted robberies and shootings that occurred on the night of June 24th, culminating in the shooting death of Nicholas Kauls, resulted in the additional charges being filed today.

Today in Fresno County Superior Court, an Amended Felony Complaint was filed against Mr. Espinoza adding additional charges for the crimes committed on June 24th.

The Amended Felony Complaint alleges that the defendant committed the crimes of:

- 1.) Assault with a Semi-Automatic Firearm with the Personal Use of a Firearm on June 24th [P.C. § 245(b) & 12022.5(a)];
- 2.) Attempted Second Degree Robbery with the Personal and Intentional Discharge of a Firearm on June 24th [P.C. § 664/211 & 12022.53(c)];
- 3.) Petty Theft on June 24th [P.C. § 484(a)];
- 4.) Murder with the Personal and Intentional Discharge of a Firearm Causing Death on June 24th [P.C. § 187(a) & 12022.53(d)];
- 5.) Attempted Murder with the Personal and Intentional Discharge of a Firearm on June 24th [P.C. § 664/187(a) & 12022.53(c)];
- 6.) Attempted Second Degree Robbery with the Personal and Intentional Discharge of a Firearm Causing Death on June 24th [P.C. § 664/211 & 12022.53(d)];
- 7.) Attempted Second Degree Robbery with the Personal and Intentional Discharge of a Firearm on June 24th [P.C. § 664/211 & 12022.53(c)];

- 8.) Assault with a Semi-Automatic Firearm with the Personal Use of a Firearm on June 24th [P.C. § 245(b) & 12022.5(a)];
- 9.) Assault with a Semi-Automatic Firearm with the Personal Use of a Firearm on June 24th [P.C. § 245(b) & 12022.5(a)];
- 10.) Assault with a Deadly Weapon (Vehicle) with the Personal Infliction of Great Bodily Injury on June 26th [P.C. § 245(a)(1) & 12022.7(a)];
- 11.) Unlawful Driving or Taking of a Vehicle on June 26th [V.C. § 10851(a)];
- 12.) Receiving Stolen Property Exceeding \$950 on June 26th [P.C. § 496(a)];
- 13.) Carrying a Concealed Firearm in a Vehicle on June 26th [P.C. § 25400(a)(1)];
- 14.) Carrying a Concealed Firearm on a Person on June 26th [P.C. § 25400(a)(2)];
- 15.) Leaving the Scene of an Accident on June 26th [V.C. § 20001(a)];
- 16.) Assault upon a Peace Officer on June 26th [P.C. § 245(c)]; and
- 17.) Resisting, Obstructing, or Delaying a Peace Officer on June 26th [P.C. § 148(a)(1)].

The murder charge also includes the special circumstance pursuant to Penal Code section 190.2 that the murder of Nicholas Kauls was committed by the defendant while he was engaged in the commission of the crime of robbery [P.C. § 190.2(a)(17)].

If convicted of the charges, Mr. Espinoza faces a sentence of either Death or Life in Prison. The District Attorney's Office is currently conducting a necessary investigation, and will make a determination and announcement regarding the death penalty at a later date.

Mr. Espinoza remains in custody at the Fresno County Jail. He is next scheduled to be in Department 33 of the Fresno County Superior Court for an Arraignment on the Amended Complaint on Monday, July 16, 2018, at 8:30 a.m.

The Media may email FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov or contact Administrative Assistant Leslie Gillespie at (559) 600-4442 with questions.

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