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WATSONVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO 75 YEARS TO LIFE FOR MURDER

Santa Cruz County District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced that Hector Manuel Rocha of Watsonville has been sentenced to more than 75 years to life in state prison for first-degree murder and related firearm offenses.

The conviction stems from the fatal shooting of Rocha's roommate, Victor Alamillo, on August 7, 2023, in the parking lot of their apartment complex on West Beach Street. Armed with a military-style assault rifle, Rocha shot and killed Alamillo before pointing the firearm at Alamillo's girlfriend and fleeing the scene. The following morning, law enforcement officers located Rocha in an agricultural field near Pajaro. After a several-hour standoff, Rocha surrendered and was taken into custody without further incident.

Following a months-long trial, a Santa Cruz County jury found Rocha guilty of first-degree premeditated murder, assault with a semiautomatic firearm, and possession of an assault weapon. Rocha had previously pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. The jury also rejected Rocha's plea of not guilty by reason of insanity, finding that he was legally sane at the time of the murder.

On June 1, 2026, the Honorable Denine Guy sentenced Rocha to 15 years and 4 months for the assault and firearm possession offenses, to be served consecutively to a sentence of 75 years to life for the murder conviction.

At the time of the murder, Rocha had prior felony convictions for resisting law enforcement, attempted arson, and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The case was investigated by the Watsonville Police Department, the Bureau of Investigations of the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, and the California Department of Justice.

Victor Alamillo is survived by a large and loving family, many of whom regularly attended court proceedings throughout the case. After years of awaiting justice, Alamillo's family expressed gratitude for the jury's verdicts, the work of the District Attorney's Office, and the sentence imposed by the Court.

District Attorney Rosell said, "This sentence ensures that Rocha will be held accountable for his deliberate and deadly actions. We are grateful to the jury, law enforcement, and prosecution team for their dedication to seeking justice."