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NEWS RELEASE

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Ventura County District Attorney Statement Regarding *People v. Ignacio Ixta, Jr.*

VENTURA, California - In 2010, Mr. Ignacio Ixta was convicted by a jury trial of attempted murder and related felony counts arising from a December 2009 shooting. In 2020, our Conviction Integrity Unit learned that four search warrants involving one of the prosecution's key witnesses had not been provided to our office with Mr. Ixta's case materials. While not specific to Mr. Ixta's case, these search warrants contained information that directly reflected upon the credibility of the key witness and, as such, were required under the law to be discovered to the defense. The Conviction Integrity Unit reviewed the case file as well as the trial transcripts and did not locate the search warrants nor find any reference to them during the trial. Accordingly, there is no evidence that the trial prosecutor or defense attorney ever knew about or possessed the search warrants. Because the information could have led to a different outcome in Mr. Ixta's trial, we determined he was legally entitled to reversal of his convictions.

Afterward, we assigned a veteran prosecutor to carefully consider whether the case should be re-tried. Based upon the current state of the evidence, he determined that we could not prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at a second trial. Specifically, the search warrant evidence undermined the government's case and exposed potential criminal conduct by a key prosecution witness. Recent criminal conduct by a different trial witness also hampered our ability to corroborate necessary facts. Furthermore, faded memories caused by the passage of time, as well as changes in case law applicable to the introduction of gang evidence, created sufficient doubts on our ability to proceed. As such, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office moved to dismiss the charges against Mr. Ixta today, which the court granted, and we requested that Mr. Ixta be released from custody.

Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko has spoken with Oxnard Police Chief Jason Benites to address systemic changes that will ensure that information within the possession of the police department is provided to both the prosecution and defense. We are confident that changes in the record management system of the agency, combined with greater information sharing among the different law enforcement entities, will help to address the issue.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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