



# ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

## NEWS RELEASE



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### Oxnard Man Convicted of First-Degree Murder, Other Related Charges

VENTURA, Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Willis Nichols (DOB 03/15/03), of Oxnard, has been convicted of seven felony charges stemming from two separate shootings in Oxnard in December 2021 and March 2022, including the first-degree murder of Adrian Sandoval. The jury found Nichols guilty of first-degree murder, two counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm, attempted murder, and three counts of shooting at an occupied motor vehicle. Several special allegations and aggravating factors were also found to be true, including personal and intentional discharge of a firearm, causing great bodily injury, and that the manner in which the crime was carried out indicated planning, sophistication, or professionalism.

On December 24, 2021, Nichols opened fire in the Target parking structure at The Collection at RiverPark in Oxnard. After a brief verbal confrontation between occupants of two vehicles, Nichols retrieved a handgun and fired multiple rounds at a pickup truck as it attempted to leave the parking structure. One victim was struck multiple times and suffered severe injuries requiring emergency surgery. Another occupant narrowly avoided being struck when a bullet traveled through the rear window of the truck. Nichols fled the scene in a dark-colored Mustang.

On March 12, 2022, Nichols carried out a second shooting at an underground party held inside an abandoned Goodwill building on Saviers Road in Oxnard. Nichols arrived at the location in a dark gray Mustang. Shortly after entering the building, Nichols approached a group of attendees and



*Willis Nichols stands with his attorney in Courtroom 45 of the Ventura County Superior Court as the verdict is read on March 4, 2026.*

opened fire at close range. Mr. Sandoval was shot in the head and died at the scene. Two additional victims were struck by gunfire, one suffering a gunshot wound to the abdomen and another to the chest. Both of these additional victims survived.

Nichols fled immediately after the shooting, running outside and entering the passenger side of the waiting Mustang, which then sped away.

Six days later, on March 18, 2022, Oxnard police officers located Nichols. He fled on foot but was apprehended after a short pursuit. Officers recovered a backpack he discarded during the chase. Inside was a loaded Glock handgun with a distinctive blue laser sight. Forensic analysis conducted by the Ventura County Crime Lab confirmed that cartridge casings recovered from the Goodwill crime scene were fired from that firearm.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Theresa Pollara, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Major Crimes Homicides Unit, prosecuted the case.

"We appreciate the jury's hard work in carefully considering the evidence involving six victims across seven charges and the related allegations," Ms. Pollara said. "Willis Nichols has shown a pattern of serious criminal behavior, and we will be seeking a sentence that reflects the severity of the crimes he committed."

Nichols is scheduled to be sentenced on April 6, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in courtroom 45 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He remains in custody without bail and faces 159 years to life in state prison. Due to his age at the time of the crime, California law will provide this convicted murderer with a chance at youthful offender parole after just 24 years in prison.

**Case: 2022016583**

**Defendant Information:**

Willis Nichols (DOB 03/15/03)

Oxnard

**Charges convicted of:**

- PC 187(a) – Murder
- (2 counts) PC 245(b) – Assault with a semiautomatic firearm
- PC 664/187(a) – Attempted murder
- (3 counts) PC 246 – Shooting at occupied motor vehicle

**Special allegations found true:**

- PC 189(a) – 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder
- PC 12022.53(d) – Personal and intentional discharge of a firearm
- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning, sophistication, or professionalism
- CRC 4.421(b)(1) – defendant has engaged in violent conduct
- PC 12022.7(a) – GBI-In commission of felony
- PC 12022.5(a)(1) – Use of firearm