



Barbershop Murder May Bring Death Penalty

Written for the web by [Mark Hedlund](#), Reporter



In a Sacramento courtroom filled with the victim's family and friends, a suspect was arraigned on charges that could carry the death penalty in the murder of a promising Cal student.

Andre Pulido, 24, was being charged with murder with the special circumstances of lying in wait. There was also an enhancement that a .40 caliber handgun was used in the September 16 killing of Rodrigo Rodriguez, Jr.

Prosecutors haven't yet decided whether or not they will seek the death penalty.

Rodriguez, a 21-year-old exemplary student at Cal Berkeley, was gunned down as he left the House of Skillz barber shop where he worked part time on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The shooting was in the evening as he left that Sunday.

As Rodriguez' parents left court, his mother Eugenia weeping, a family friend said they're "still in deep trauma over this unexpected and unfortunate event."

"The fact they were face to face (in court) with the person who laid in wait for their child to come to kill him is just a very unimaginable place for his parents to be right now," said Jean Crowder, a family friend and eighth grade teacher of the victim.

Sacramento police detectives believe the shooter was actually after someone else who resembles Rodriguez. They believe it was revenge over an earlier incident where Pulido was shot and wounded.

Defense lawyers Michael Bowman and Richard Chan said after the arraignment they believe the case of mistaken identity is on the part of detectives. They said Pulido was also a working man, a receptionist at a south Sacramento dental office, and his only prior criminal history is a minor misdemeanor.

"He's scared," said Bowman. "This is a young man man who has no criminal record, and he's sitting in custody facing serious charges before we can show his innocence."

Judge David De Alba allowed cameras inside court for the arraignment, but prohibited photos of Pulido's facial features because of pending line-ups involving potential witnesses to the shooting.

As Rodrigo Rodriguez, Sr. and Eugenia Rodriguez sat in the front row during the arraignment, the rest of the courtroom was filled with other family and friends. Many wore memorial shirts with Rodriguez' photo silkscreened on the front.

Pulido, held on no bail, was ordered back to court in two weeks.



The Big Story of The Sacramento Bee

This story is taken from [Sacbee / News](#).

Man arraigned on charges of slaying Rodrigo Rodriguez

By Crystal Carreon - Bee Staff Writer

Published 3:53 pm PDT Wednesday, October 10, 2007

An Elk Grove dental office receptionist accused of slaying a promising college student last month in an apparent case of mistaken identity appeared Wednesday in Sacramento Superior Court to hear the murder charge against him, amid sobs from the victim's family.

Andre Pulido, 24, did not enter a plea to charges of murder with the special circumstance of lying in wait, which could carry the death penalty for the Sept. 16 shooting death of Rodrigo Rodriguez, 21, outside an Oak Park barber shop. He was scheduled to return to court on Oct. 25.

During his brief appearance before Judge David De Alba, Pulido, with shoulder-length ringlets, stood in an orange jail jumpsuit facing the bench with a furrowed brow. De Alba ordered that no photographs of Pulido's likeness be taken, as investigators continue to interview witnesses.

Behind him, rows of friends, supporters and family members of Rodriguez crowded into the courtroom dressed in white T-shirts with the young man's picture emblazoned across the front.

On that evening last month, Rodriguez, a University of California, Berkeley business student, was leaving the House of Skillz barbershop on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard when he was confronted by a man believed to be Pulido.

Witnesses said the man had waited in the parking lot for about half an hour before approaching his target. Rodriguez was shot four times.

The gunman, witnesses told police, then calmly left Rodriguez dying on the ground. He slipped into the passenger seat of a car that drove away.

Pulido was arrested Friday, and police this week said Rodriguez's death was a case of mistaken identity.

Outside of the courtroom Wednesday, one of Pulido's attorneys, Michael Bowman, dismissed the murder charge against Pulido.

"This young man has no record; he's scared," Bowman said. "There is no evidence that he's admitted to any crime."

Deputy District Attorney Eric Kindall declined to comment on the case.

Go to: [Sacbee / Back to story](#)

This article is protected by copyright and should not be printed or distributed for anything except personal use.
The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852
Phone: (916) 321-1000