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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** December 23, 2009    **Contact:** Pete Martin, Chief Investigator  
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**Husband found Guilty for Murder of Wife – Victim’s Body Never Found**

(Woodland, CA) – District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that on December 22, at the conclusion of a trial that lasted almost six weeks, a unanimous jury in the Yolo County Superior Court found Felipe Cruz Hernandez guilty for the murder of his wife, Leticia Barrales Ramos. Ms. Barrales Ramos, a 28-year-old mother, went missing from her home in Winters on April 12, 2009. The last person known to have seen and talked to her was her husband, Felipe Cruz Hernandez.

Evidence at trial showed that Mr. Cruz Hernandez had a motive to kill his wife because she had filed for divorce, was seeing another man, and was requesting custody of their daughter, who turned ten on May 6. Furthermore, some evidence suggested that Mr. Hernandez showed signs of jealousy—following his wife in a borrowed vehicle, confronting her and her boyfriend, and eventually borrowing a firearm from his brother.

Despite the fact that a body has yet to be found, FBI Special Investigator Christopher Hopkins described the apartment shared by Mr. Hernandez and his wife and daughter as “a homicide scene.” A search conducted at the apartment on May 28 initially revealed very little, until FBI Agent David Sesma found a rental receipt for a carpet steam cleaner dated April 13—the day after Leticia went missing. That discovery literally put FBI Agents on their hands and knees, where they found traces of blood on various pieces of furniture. Finally, the living room carpet was rolled up and three very large bloodstains were found underneath the carpet and on the carpet pad.

Mr. Hernandez had claimed that his wife left for a family emergency, but her apparent destination changed—he told law enforcement that she went to Vera Cruz, he told family members that she went to North Carolina, and he told her brother in North Carolina that he didn’t have to tell him anything. The defense introduced evidence that relatives of Mr. Hernandez received phone calls from someone who claimed to have seen Leticia at the Mexican border and that she had encountered deportation difficulties with US

Immigration and Customs Enforcement. However, investigators found no evidence that she had any contact with ICE officials. Instead, during the search of the apartment, they found her purse, passport, Mexican Voter Registration Card, and a credit card in her name. In addition, her niece produced her wallet, which contained her Driver's License, her Mexican Consulate card, and over \$1000 in cash.

Prosecutor Robert Trudgen also noted that Leticia left no notice with anyone else that she was leaving or how to contact her, despite the fact that she had two jobs where she was described as a responsible employee who always kept them up to date on her work schedule.

Felipe Cruz Hernandez is scheduled for sentencing for the sole count of Murder in the Second Degree on January 22, 2010, at 10:30 am in Department 6 of the Yolo County Superior Court. He faces 15 years to life in prison.

Deputy District Attorney Robert Trudgen hailed the verdict as a fair and just result in holding Leticia's killer accountable, but noted that the remaining tragedy is that Leticia Barrales Ramos has yet to receive a proper burial and that her ten year old girl has to grow up without a mother.

For more information, please contact Chief Investigator Pete Martin at (530) 681-7232.

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