



**COUNTY OF YOLO**  
**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
**JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

301 SECOND STREET - WOODLAND, CALIFORNIA 95695 - 530.666.8180 - FAX 530.666.8185

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** March 7, 2011      **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy  
**email**      [jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org](mailto:jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org)

**Attackers of Sikh Taxi Driver Plead to Assault Charges**  
**Pedro Ramirez pleads to a Hate Crime and will go to state prison for 13 years**

(Woodland, CA) -March 7, 2011- District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that today 42-year-old Pedro Ramirez of Natomas pled to a felony assault charge and admitted that his attack on a Sikh taxi driver on November 28, 2010 was a hate crime. He also admitted that he caused great bodily injury to the victim. Johnny Morales, Jr., 33, of West Sacramento, who had a lesser role in the attack, pled to felony assault. As part plea agreement, Ramirez agreed to a 13 year prison sentence. Morales will be placed on felony probation in will be sentenced to up to one year in county jail.

This prosecution arose from the attack on Harbhajan Singh on November 28, 2010. Mr. Singh, a cab driver, was driving the defendants and their wives home from Harlow's Bar in Sacramento. Mr. Singh was wearing a traditional Sikh turban and beard. During the cab drive, Ramirez shouted racial epithets and accused Mr. Singh of being Muslim. Ramirez punched Mr. Singh in the face approximately ten times while Morales punched him from behind. The ongoing attack continued causing Mr. Singh to suffer multiple lacerations, a fracture of the orbital bone in his face and a spinal fracture. Ramirez also attempted to pull Mr. Singh from the car but was prevented by Mr. Singh's seatbelt. Ultimately, the wife of Ramirez stopped the beating by throwing her body between Mr. Singh and her husband. Morales and Ramirez then pulled Ramirez's wife from the car, allowing Mr. Singh to escape in his cab.

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig credited the detectives and crime scene investigators of the West Sacramento Police Department with bringing the two men to justice. Crime scene investigators found a fingerprint in the victim's blood from the car, which the California Department of Justice identified as belonging to Ramirez. A series of interviews conducted by detectives established the roles of Ramirez and Morales in the attack.

"Mr. Singh did nothing to provoke this vicious attack except to be from a different culture," commented District Attorney Reisig. "Attacking someone because of their race,

religion or other protected basis,” continued Reisig, “is not only heinous, but against the ideals we hold as Americans, and must not be tolerated.”

Deputy District Attorney Ryan Couzens prosecuted the case. Couzens stated, “Mr. Singh suffered horrific physical and emotional injuries. The Sikh community has also suffered. The victim advocate on this case has been instrumental in helping the Singh family throughout this ordeal.”

Yolo Superior Court Judge Timothy Fall and Judge Fall, who took the pleas, is expected to sentence the two men on April 1, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. in Department 2 of the Yolo County Superior Court.

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