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BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Man Admits to Violent Knife Attack of 3 Men
State vs. Eric York Cruz

October 8, 2021 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that on September 28, 2021, Eric York Cruz, 22, admitted to the brutal stabbing of three Cherokee County men in 2018.

Cruz entered a guilty plea to 3 counts of aggravated assault and 5 counts of aggravated battery. At the conclusion of the hearing, Chief Judge Ellen McElyea sentenced him to 30 years, with the first 20 years to serve in confinement and the remaining 10 years to be served on probation.

Cruz, who is a California resident, traveled to the victims' Ball Ground home in December 2018 for a visit. None of the men were aware that the defendant was on probation for stabbing his parents at their home in Vista, California.

On the night of December 22, 2018, Cruz became agitated and combative, and made accusations of infidelity involving his relationship with one of the victims and another roommate. One of the residents demanded that Cruz leave. When Cruz refused, the man called 911 in reference to an "unwelcome guest."

Cruz then retrieved a knife from the kitchen and started stabbing each man, beginning with the individual on the 911 call. All three victims received multiple stab wounds that left permanent scarring and nerve damage. One victim was stabbed 24 times.

During Cruz's vicious assault, one resident grabbed the knife by the blade to protect his friend and kicked Cruz down the steps. He then retrieved a Samurai sword in a defensive manner to stop the assault.

When Cherokee Sheriff's Office deputies arrived at the home, they found a gruesome scene, with four injured men and no clear indication of who was the aggressor.

One victim had been eviscerated and needed immediate life-saving treatment. The other victims had stab wounds to the head, neck, and abdomen. Cruz was also injured, due to a self-inflicted wound. Officers treated injuries while they investigated the case and ensured no more violence took place.

"On the night of this incident, law enforcement officers walked into a chaotic scene and quickly went to work. Deputy Kurtz Garfield literally held one victim's life in his hands and restrained a very violent individual while waiting for backup to arrive. Deputy Jamel Campbell controlled the scene and the bleeding of the other injured parties," said Deputy Chief ADA Rachel Ashe, who prosecuted the case on behalf of the State. "One resident of the home did what any hero would do – he ran towards danger to save his friend. If not for his intervention, I have no doubt that this attack would have resulted in a homicide."

The State was prepared to go to trial in October; however, Cruz elected to enter a plea at the September 28, 2021, motions hearing.

When he is released from prison, Cruz must adhere to conditions of probation which include no contact with the victims, evaluation and treatment for mental health and substance abuse, no possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, and payment of restitution and attorney fees.

“Domestic violence usually begins with manipulation and control, which escalates to violent acts. No one expected this defendant to react in the way that he did. He was relentless in his drive to inflict injury on these men. They are lucky to be alive,” said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “This sentence will ensure that society is protected and this violent man remains in confinement for a very long time.”

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, during which organizations across the country honor survivors impacted by this crime. According to a study by the CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner.

If you or someone you know is impacted by domestic violence, please contact the Cherokee Family Violence Center, CFVC.org, 770-479-1703 (24/7 crisis hotline). In case of an emergency, call 911.

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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