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PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville—A man wanted on murder charges is back in custody in Madison County after spending three years evading U.S. authorities.

Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons filed charges in 2011 against Fernando Gallegos-Ochoa, 20, in connection with a shooting in Pontoon Beach. Officers from the Pontoon Beach Police Department were called to La Mexicana Restaurant after a 911 call at 12:47 a.m. on August 20, 2011 in response to a shooting. Two victims, both from Pontoon Beach, were found in the parking lot. Jesus Flores (d.o.b. 06/19/91) was shot once through the head and died later at St. Louis University Hospital. Luis F. Ortiz (d.o.b. 01/08/93) was shot three times. He survived the shooting.

At the time, detectives determined that a dispute arose between the men earlier that evening at La Mexicana and led to an altercation on the parking lot. During the exchange, Gallegos-Ochoa shot both men and fled on foot. Police believe that the men were in different gangs, however, it is unclear if gang membership led to the dispute between them.

On August 24, 2011, Gallegos-Ochoa was charged with two counts of First Degree Murder (Class M 20-60 years); one count of Attempt First Degree Murder (Class X Enhanced 25 years to Life); one count of Aggravated Battery with a Firearm (Class X 6-30 years) and one count of Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm (Class 1 4-15 years).

At the time of charging, the U.S. Marshals assisted local law enforcement officers in the search for the defendant who was believed to be in the country illegally. In February, State's Attorney Gibbons was notified that Gallegos-Ochoa had been taken into custody in Mexico. Following his apprehension, the State's Attorney's Office worked closely with federal officials to secure Gallegos-Ochoa's extradition back to the U.S. to face his 2011 charges. Notice was provided last week that the extradition process had been successful and the defendant was set to return to the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville where he arrived last night. He is being held without bond.

State's Attorney Gibbons praised the U.S. Marshals' dogged efforts in capturing the fugitive. "The long arm of the law finally caught up to the defendant," said Gibbons. "Their successful effort in capturing Gallegos-Ochoa allows my office to move forward in prosecuting the defendant for a senseless and violent crime. Our mission at the State's Attorney's Office is to seek justice and this case shows that we will not give up on that goal no matter how long it may take." In addition to the work of the U.S. Marshals, Gibbons commended the exceptional work of his staff, including Assistant State's Attorney Jim Buckley, and the cooperative effort between the various law enforcement agencies, such as the Department of Justice and the Pontoon Beach Police Department, who were all involved in the process of not only capturing Gallegos-Ochoa, but also bringing him back to Madison County. "Joint efforts such as this show American law enforcement at its best."

This charge, as well as the statements made herein, is based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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