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THE DAILY SENTINEL

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO



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Man guilty in '89 jealousy murder

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Jurors on Thursday convicted Rafael "Shorty" Garcia of first-degree murder in the 1988 shooting death of a Palisade man, siding with prosecutors who said Garcia was out for vengeance on his ex-wife's new boyfriend when he first stabbed, then shot the victim.

Mesa County District Judge Lance Timbreza will sentence the now 67-year-old Garcia to life in prison without parole

on Sept. 8, the only option he has under the law, for the slaying of 38-year-old Charles Peeler.

Assistant District Attorney Rich Tuttle asked that sentencing be delayed until then to allow all of Porter's children the opportunity to attend the hearing.



RAFAEL GARCIA

On Valentine's Day 1988, Josie Garcia filed for divorce against Shorty Garcia after nearly 18 years of marriage. Josie Garcia — who had been separated from her husband for months — became friendly with Porter, a neighbor in the 3600 block of F Road in Palisade, witnesses testified during Shorty Garcia's trial.

When Shorty Garcia learned of his estranged wife's friendship with the single father of four, he became enraged, making threats against Porter to

multiple people, including his ex-wife and another neighbor. He also kept a journal filled with entries threatening death to Porter, and his daughter reported to law enforcement hearing him say he planned to kill Porter and flee to Mexico, his home state.

On July 3, 1988, Porter was at Josie Garcia's home at 3680 F Road to watch a movie. Sometime around midnight, July 4, Shorty Garcia burst through the home's front door wielding a shotgun, Josie Garcia testified earlier in her ex-husband's trial. After being disarmed in a wrestling match with Josie Garcia, Shorty Garcia wrestled Porter to the ground and stabbed him several times.

Josie Garcia testified that she ran to her room, where she ducked under her bed. Porter used to flee out a back bedroom in her home. She heard her ex-husband's shots, one of which caught Porter in the side, the other at an upward angle from his chin up through his head.

Law enforcement officers searched the dark orchards near Josie Garcia's house, but weren't able to find Shorty Garcia, who at some point after the shooting fled to Mexico.

LIFE AFTER THE CRIME

Testifying in his own defense earlier this week, Shorty Garcia said he went to be with his ailing father in Colima, a seaside

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