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AURORA STREET GANG MEMBER GETS LIFE IN PRISON FOR SECOND MURDER CONVICTION

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An Aurora man today learned that he must spend the rest of his life in prison, the result of his second murder conviction.

Lorenzo I. Alvarez, 24 (d.o.b. 7-1-1987), of the 700 block of Spring Street, Aurora, was sentenced today to life in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Alvarez was convicted Oct. 28, 2011, by a Kane County jury, of first-degree murder for the March 18, 2007, shooting death of 24-year-old Cedric Foster of Chicago. In addition, the jury determined that Alvarez personally discharged the firearm that caused Foster's death.

The mandatory life sentence was delivered by Circuit Judge Timothy Q. Sheldon. The life term was mandatory because Alvarez has been convicted of a prior murder.

Just before 7 p.m. March 18, 2007, Alvarez and two co-defendants were in a vehicle that was driving on Aurora's southeast side. They sought a specific member of a rival street gang whom they planned to shoot. Alvarez was the passenger in the front seat of a beige Nissan Altima driven by co-defendant Ezequil Rivera, 27 (d.o.b. 9-12-1984), of the 200 block of Zengele Avenue, Aurora. Co-defendant Miguel Delacruz, 22 (d.o.b. 6-9-1989), of the 100 block of North State Street, Aurora, was a passenger in the back seat.

When they failed to find their intended victim, they instead sought any rival gang member. In the vicinity of Kane and North Ohio streets, they saw a maroon Chevrolet Tahoe driven by 24-year-old Cedric Foster of Chicago. They assumed, falsely, that Foster was a rival street gang member and followed his vehicle. Near the intersection of Lehnertz Avenue and Sherman Street, Rivera pulled his vehicle alongside Foster's vehicle, and Alvarez fired four shots from a 9mm handgun at Foster. Foster was struck three times in the head. His vehicle continued eastbound and struck a house on Lehnert Circle. When police arrived, Foster was dead.

After an investigation, Alvarez, Delacruz and Rivera were charged with first-degree murder in Foster's death. The cases against Delacruz and Rivera are pending.

On Dec. 31, 2009, Alvarez was convicted by Judge Sheldon of two counts of first-degree murder, and two counts of aggravated discharge of a firearm for the March 6, 2007, gang-motivated shooting death of 36-year-old Oscar Campos of Aurora.

On Oct. 7, 2010, Alvarez was sentenced by Judge Sheldon to 65 years in IDOC for Campos' murder. That sentence included a mandatory 25-year term because Alvarez fired the handgun that killed Campos.

"Lorenzo Alvarez is a career criminal whose presence in the community places everyone's safety in jeopardy. He has proven in the last two decades that he has no regard for human life, and that the only appropriate place for him is behind bars for the rest of his life," Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahon said.

"I again wish to thank the Aurora Police Department for its thorough investigations of these cases. Also, my thanks to Kane County Assistant State's Attorneys David Belshan and Adam Katz, who worked hard to successfully prosecute these cases."

The charges against Delacruz and Rivera are not proof of guilt. Delacruz and Rivera are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial in which it is the state's burden to prove their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.