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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Approved by JAK**  
**Press Release 20-18**

## **Charges Filed In ‘Bakersfield 3’ Case Alleging First-Degree Murder of Micah Holsonbake**

On Wednesday, May 27, 2020, District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer was joined by BPD Chief Greg Terry in announcing the filing of First-Degree Murder charges against Matthew Queen and Baylee Despot for their alleged roles in the 2018 killing of Micah Holsonbake. James Kulstad, Micah Holsonbake and Baylee Despot have been referred to as the “Bakersfield 3,” as they were a group of connected people who were either killed or went missing in 2018. The murder charges are part of criminal filing that includes 34 criminal charges encompassing alleged criminal conduct that ranges from December 2017 through July of 2019.

In addition to the alleged First-Degree Murder of Holsonbake, Matthew Queen and Baylee Despot are both charged with a conspiracy to murder and torture Holsonbake, as well as with the actual torture and kidnapping of Holsonbake. Despot and Queen are also jointly charged in with the unlawful manufacturing of assault weapons. The majority of the additional charges pertain to Queen, and include criminal threats, kidnapping, assault with a firearm and other unlawful weapons charges.

Although Baylee Despot has been reported missing since 2018, there is no known physical evidence that definitively confirms her possible death. As a result of the filing of charges, an arrest warrant will be issued for Baylee Despot’s arrest. Matthew Queen is already in custody and will be arraigned on the new charges.

Some of the filed charges against Queen are duplicative of the several filed cases for which he is already in custody awaiting trial<sup>1</sup>. The filing of this case incorporates all of Queen’s pending charges into the

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<sup>1</sup> Pending Cases include:

BF179547A  
BF177882A  
BF177423A  
BF176579A  
BF 170640A

current filed case.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer offered a reminder that an accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law, and commented about the dedicated work that led to the filing of charges in this extensive investigation:

“This years-long investigation was made possible by the combined efforts of the Bakersfield Police Department and the District Attorney’s Office. Our common goal is to never stop searching for answers on homicide crimes, and our combined dedication to solving this case has never wavered.”

The prosecution of the case will be led by District Attorney Homicide Unit Supervisor Eric Smith.

A copy of the criminal complaint is available upon request.