



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
VAL VERDE, KINNEY & TERRELL  
COUNTIES, TEXAS

JESSICA A. SHAWVER-SAVINO  
*Assistant District Attorney*

BENJAMIN A. MOORMAN  
*Assistant District Attorney*

AMANDA POOLE  
*Assistant District Attorney/BPU*

---

**SUZANNE WEST**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**STATE OF TEXAS V. SANTOS JAVIER LOPEZ**

On July 13<sup>th</sup> 2022, Del Rio resident, Santos Javier Lopez was found guilty of Arson and sentenced to 15 years in prison with a \$5,000 fine. This charge stems from a riot among state inmates the Val Verde Correctional Facility on the evening of October 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, while Mr. Lopez was awaiting trial on unrelated charges.

During the three-day trial held in the 63<sup>rd</sup> District Court of the Honorable Roland Andrade, the Jury heard testimony from several jailers who stated Lopez deliberately covered a security camera in the housing unit which Lopez shared with seven other individuals. Witnesses also testified Lopez began to pile bedsheets and a mattress near the cell door, and used a microwave and a metal razor to create a spark, then carried a lit piece of rolled toilet tissue from the back of the cell and ignited the bedding, starting a fire.

The fire caused property damage within the housing unit, and caused a jailer to become ill from the smoke which filled the jail. In an attempt to stop the flames from causing further danger to inmates and GEO personnel, correctional staff frantically attempted to extinguish the flames, but were struck with food trays and bars of soap from multiple inmates in the housing unit. Chemical agents were deployed by correctional staff to stop the riot.

After an hour and a half of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of guilty. After a brief sentencing hearing, detailing Mr. Lopez's prior prison sentence in 2017, the jury came back with a sentence of 15 years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice along with a \$5,000 fine. By law, this sentence carries with it the possibility for parole, but Mr. Lopez will be eligible after serving ½ of the term.

Assistant District Attorney Jessica Shawver-Savino served as lead prosecutor with the assistance of District Attorney Suzanne West. Also assisting was District Attorney Investigator Larry Pope.

When asked about the trial and its outcome, Savino states, "I am truly grateful for the service of our jury during this trial, and would also like to extend our gratitude to all court personnel and law enforcement partners who made this outcome possible. Our jailers, face a degree of danger every day in their line of work, in order to protect us from dangerous people. This jury, through its verdict, has shown that their service and dedication has not been ignored by our community."