



County of San Bernardino
Office of the District Attorney
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PRESS RELEASE

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Multiple Murder Charges Filed Against Leaders of Religious High Control Group, His Way Spirit Led Assemblies

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, Calif. – On Thursday, December 11, 2025, a joint operation involving Redlands Police Department, Colton Police Department, California Department of Justice, Riverside Sheriff's Office and San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office took place in the Cities of Hemet and Colton, to arrest several individuals belonging to a religious high-control group known as His Way Spirit Led Assemblies.

The arrests are tied to two open and ongoing investigations, one for the alleged murder of Emilio Ghanem, 40, who went missing in 2023 which is investigated by the Redlands Police Department, California Department of Justice, and California Highway Patrol. The second, for the alleged 2010 murder of 4-year-old Timothy Thomas which is handled by Colton Police Department. Additional arrests were made related to firearms located during the investigation.

The group's leader, Shelley Bailey "Kat" Martin, 62, and member Rudy Moreno, 43, were arrested for their alleged involvement in the murders of Emilio Ghanem and additional various weapon charges.

Shelley Bailey "Kat" Martin, Darryl Muzic Martin, 58, and former group member Andre Thomas were arrested for their involvement in the 2010 death of 4-year-old Timothy Thomas.

On Monday December 15th, the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office filed the following charges related to the death of Emilio Ghanem.

Defendant Shelley "Kat" Martin

- PC 187 Murder – Victim Emilio Ghanem
- PC 182 Conspiracy to Commit Murders
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Defendant Rudy Moreno

- PC187 Murder – Victim Emilio Ghanem
- PC 182 Conspiracy to Commit Murder

“The recent arrests connected to the disappearance of Mr. Emilio Ghanem represent the persistence and dedication of the Redlands Police Department’s investigators and our law enforcement partners,” said Redlands Police Chief Rachel Tolber. “Since May of 2023, when Mr. Ghanem was reported missing after he was last seen at a Starbucks in the City of Redlands, RPD detectives have undertaken an extensive and complex investigation, working closely with local and state law enforcement partners and dedicating the time and resources this case deserves. The information detectives developed led to the arrests of two suspects on murder charges and four additional suspects on related weapons charges. I am proud of the dedication demonstrated by our officers and partner agencies, and as the case advances, the Redlands Police Department remains committed to ensuring justice is served for Mr. Ghanem and his family.”

Chief Tolber continued, “I also wish to extend our sincere condolences to Mr. Ghanem’s family and friends. They have faced an incredibly difficult situation and the progression from hope to heartbreak over the past two years as this case has moved from a missing person to a homicide investigation. Our hearts are with them during this difficult time.”

The investigation led by Redlands Police Department was successful due in large part to support from our federal partners at California Department of Justice.

“Today, I am thinking of Emilio Ghanem’s family and friends, and the pain they have endured since he went missing over two years ago,” said California Attorney General Rob Bonta. “The California Department of Justice is proud of our Special Operations Unit’s contributions to this complex investigation. We are hopeful that these arrests will bring justice and a measure of healing to this devastating case. I’m grateful to our dedicated local and state law enforcement partners for their tireless work to bring justice for Mr. Ghanem. When we work together, we get results.”

Also on December 15th, the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s Office filed the following charges related to the death of Timothy Thomas.

Defendant Shelley “Kat” Martin – PC 187 Murder
Defendant Darryl Martin – PC 187 Murder
Defendant Andre Thomas – PC 187 Murder

“The arrests and charges filed against the suspects responsible for the death of four-year-old Timothy “Timo” Thomas are the first steps toward long-awaited justice,” said Colton Police Chief Anthony Vega. “Although Timo’s life was cut short 15 years ago, the circumstances of his death still weigh heavily on our officers who never gave up on his case. Thanks to the relentless efforts of Colton detectives and strong relationships with our allied law enforcement partners, the final pieces of this long and complex investigation have finally come together.”

“The Colton Police Department has never forgotten Timo. I am grateful for the tenacity of our detectives who investigated this case in 2010, and for everyone who worked tirelessly to gather new information so the individuals who should have protected and cared for young Timo, will finally be held responsible.”

At the time of arrests, victim advocates from the District Attorney Bureau of Victim Services and DA crisis response K9 were present to assist the members of the high-control group with food, water and contacts for additional resources.

If anyone believes they are a victim, or knows a victim please contact Redlands Police Department at missingperson_emilio@redlandspolice.org or by phone at (909)551-4424 or Colton Police Department at detective@coltonca.gov or by phone at (909)370-5019.

Arrestment, bail and next hearing date information will be updated as it becomes available.

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