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# Jury acquits inmate of murder charges

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An inmate on trial for the stabbing death of another inmate at the Limon Correction Facility in 2004 was acquitted by a jury Friday.

Alejandro Perez had been charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder in the death of inmate Jeffrey Heird. A Prowers County jury deliberated for about seven hours before finding Perez not guilty on both charges. Defense attorney Jim Castle said Monday that the prosecution's murder case was based mainly on testimony and the credibility of a jailhouse informant. "There wasn't any physical evidence linking Perez to the crime," Castle said. Carol Chambers, district attorney for the 18th Judicial District, released a statement saying the office was disappointed but not surprised by the outcome. "It is difficult to prosecute any homicide that occurs in a correctional facility," the statement said. "When the witnesses are other inmates, there are obvious credibility issues that must be overcome. "In addition, there is frequently witness intimidation. Those who do provide information to law enforcement or testify at trial face retaliation and the possibility that they too will be murdered as a result of their cooperation." Perez is still in prison for the 1996 murder of a man at a Denver party. He was sentenced to 32 years in prison on a second-degree murder charge and for disarming a peace officer. Perez is eligible for parole this summer; his release date from prison is September 2026, Castle said. Perez and David Bueno were charged in the stabbing death of Heird. Bueno's lawyers argued that Heird was a white supremacist and an informant and was probably killed by other white supremacists who placed the blame on Bueno and Perez for the fatal stabbing. Bueno's murder conviction was overturned in October after a Lincoln County judge ruled that Chambers' office withheld evidence. Chambers

has appealed that decision to the Colorado Court of Appeals. Bueno and Perez originally faced the death penalty, but Bueno was sentenced to life in prison and the DA's office pulled the death penalty off the table for Perez, his lawyers said. Bueno was serving a 24-year prison sentence for burglary when Heird was killed. Bueno remains in prison on that conviction. Carlos Illescas: 303-954-1175 or [cillescas@denverpost.com](mailto:cillescas@denverpost.com)

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