

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

SALINAS MAN SENTENCED TO 40 YEARS TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR MURDER AND OTHER CHARGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Judge Pamela Butler sentenced Anthony Romero, age 21, of Salinas, to a term of 40 years-to-life in state prison for one count of first degree murder, two counts of robbery, and three counts of assault with a deadly weapon. Romero also admitted special allegations that he personally used a firearm during some of these crimes. The charges will constitute six “strikes” on the defendant’s record, under the California Three Strikes Law.

On October 31, 2014, Romero began following Paul Chung and his wife as they drove to Creekside Monument Park, off of Highway 68, for their daily morning walk on the trails. Romero approached them while they were still in their vehicle, brandishing a firearm, and demanded their money and property. Mr. Chung handed over his wallet, as well as the keys to his vehicle. During the course of the robbery, Romero shot Paul Chung in the head, killing him.

Romero then drove to Castroville, where he robbed a juvenile of his cellular phone. Romero then drove to another location in Castroville, approaching two men and demanding their money and phones. When these two men attempted to run away, Romero shot at them, striking one of the men.

Romero then traveled home, encountering the registered owner of the vehicle he was driving – his girlfriend’s father, whom he had never met. The registered owner attempted to flag down Romero, and then got out of his vehicle to see who was driving his daughter’s vehicle, when Romero accelerated, striking the registered owner and fleeing the area. The registered owner was not injured.

Calling the circumstances of this case a “senseless tragedy,” Judge Butler remarked that the letters she received from Paul Chung’s two adult children were “the most sincere and moving letters” she had ever received in this type of case. She stated that the “inner strength and beauty” of Mr. Chung’s children, in their ability to forgive the man who killed their father, show what an amazing man he was in life.

This case was investigated by Monterey County Sheriff’s detectives Shaheen Jorgenson and Martin Opseth, with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Salinas Police Department, and the Monterey County Strategic Team Interdiction Narcotics and Gangs Task Force (S.T.I.N.G.).