

# **\* NEWS RELEASE \***

## **KING CITY WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO 2013 MURDER OF SALINAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT**

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Angela Nichole Zuniga, age 24 of King City, pleaded guilty in the May 2013 stabbing death of 14-year-old Salinas High School student Ricardo "Richie" Ruiz. Zuniga will be sentenced to a term of 15 years to life in prison following her guilty plea to second-degree murder, with an enhancement that she committed the crime for the benefit of the Sureño criminal street gang.

On the afternoon of May 17, 2013, Zuniga and a female friend took a bus from King City to Salinas, exiting at East Alisal and California Streets. Around the same time, 14-year-old Ricardo Ruiz and four teenage friends were walking to a taco shop at the corner of East Alisal St. and North Madeira Ave. Zuniga, a documented Sureño gang member, spotted the group from across the street, chased after them, and approached them with her hands behind her back. Zuniga chest-bumped one of the females in the group and asked her if she was a gang member. Ricardo intervened and attempted to tell Zuniga to calm down. Zuniga then challenged Ricardo about his gang affiliation. When he answered her question, she pulled a knife from behind her back and stabbed him twice in the neck. During the stabbing, Zuniga made statements indicating that she was a Sureño from King City. She then unsuccessfully attempted to carjack a woman parked nearby and fled the area on foot.

Ricardo suffered severe brain damage due to blood loss and was nonresponsive to treatment by the time he arrived at the hospital. He was taken off of life support four days later.

Detectives were able to identify Zuniga as the killer after they obtained surveillance video from the transit company and shared it with local law enforcement. Zuniga's supervising probation officer recognized her, and several witnesses subsequently identified her in a photographic line-up. Zuniga also sent several incriminating text messages indicating her involvement in the murder.

Zuniga, then 21, fled the country after the stabbing. She was ultimately arrested on July 30, 2014 in Tijuana, Mexico.

Zuniga's friend, who was initially arrested in June 2013 after being identified on bus surveillance, was not criminally charged in connection with the homicide.

Zuniga will receive a sentence of 15 years to life in prison when she is sentenced on October 27, 2016 by Monterey Superior Court Judge Larry E. Hayes. The case was investigated by Detectives Byron Gansen and Kristine Fairbanks of the Salinas Police Department.