

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

KING CITY WOMAN SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS TO LIFE FOR THE MURDER OF A SALINAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

October 27, 2016

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Matthew L'Heureux, Deputy District Attorney
(831) 755-5267

Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Angela Nichole Zuniga, age 24 of King City, was sentenced to serve 15 years-to-life in prison for the May 2013 stabbing death of 14-year-old Salinas High School student Ricardo "Richie" Ruiz. On September 8, 2016, Zuniga pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, with an enhancement that she committed the crime for the benefit of the Sureño criminal street gang. She was sentenced by Monterey Superior Court Judge Larry E. Hayes.

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 Street and North Madeira Avenue. 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 non-responsive to treatment by the time he arrived at the hospital. He was taken off of life support four days later.

Zuniga, then age 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.

The case was investigated by Detectives Byron Gansen and Kristine Fairbanks of the Salinas Police Department.