

# **\* NEWS RELEASE \***

## **SURENO GANG MEMBERS SENTENCED FOR 2014 SALINAS MURDER**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that on September 25, 2017 Judge Carrie Panetta sentenced two Salinas Sureno gang members to lengthy terms in prison for their participation in the June 8, 2014 murder of eighteen-year-old Daniel Castillo. Castillo, who was just days from graduating from a Salinas High School, was walking through La Paz Middle School with a friend when a group of Sureno gang members spotted them. Augustine Lopez, then age 20, of Salinas, got out of a vehicle driven by Rene Vasquez, then 26, also of Salinas. Both were active Sureno criminal street gang members at the time and remain so to this day.

Lopez approached Mr. Castillo and fired six rounds into his body. He then ran to Vasquez's waiting car and they sped off to the nearby apartment of another Sureno gang member, where they hid from police. Mr. Castillo died at the hospital that afternoon. At Vasquez's request his girlfriend, Karen Rodriguez, reported Vasquez's vehicle stolen just after the murder, to aide him in evading apprehension.

Determined police work over the course of the next year by Detectives Bryan McKinley, Ken Schwener and Gabriel Gonzales, among many others, as well as District Attorney Investigators Adam Sepagan and John Coletti led to the eventual arrests of Lopez and Vasquez. Lopez pled guilty to first degree murder and admitted firing a gun causing great bodily injury as well as a gang enhancement. He was sentenced to 50 years to life in prison. Vasquez pled guilty to voluntary manslaughter, admitted a prior strike offense, a prior serious felony conviction and a gang enhancement, as well as another unrelated firearms offense and participation in a jail gang attack and was sentenced to 39 years and 4 months in prison.