

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

## **SALINAS VALLEY INMATE CONVICTED OF FIRST DEGREE MURDER**

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: RICK STORMS, Deputy District Attorney  
(831) 755-5070**

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Horacio Gonzalez, age 25, an inmate at Salinas Valley State Prison was found guilty of first degree murder by Judge Lydia Villarreal.

On October 26, 2014, Luis Baladez, age 23, was locked inside a cell at Salinas Valley State Prison with his cellmate Gonzalez. A corrections officer, while making his routine inspection rounds, saw that Baladez was completely covered with a bed sheet, and ordered Gonzalez to remove the sheet so he could confirm Baladez was in fact in the cell. When the sheet was removed, he saw Baladez covered in blood with numerous stab wounds, unresponsive, and ultimately dead at the scene. Further investigation and forensic examination revealed that Gonzalez used an inmate manufactured weapon to stab Baladez 19 times in the neck and chest areas, puncturing the heart, liver, lungs, and carotid artery. Investigators were unable to detect a motive.

Judge Villarreal found Gonzalez guilty of first degree murder, whereupon he asked for immediate sentencing. He was sentenced to of 25 years-to-life in prison which was doubled to 50 years-to-life because of a prior murder/strike conviction, all consecutive to the sentence he was serving at the time of the murder.

The case was investigated by Salinas Valley State Prison Investigative Services Unit, Monterey County District Attorney Investigators Tony Rodriguez and Julie Callahan, and Investigator David Doglietto of the Greenfield Police Department CSI unit.