

*** NEWS RELEASE ***
**SALINAS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO
PASTOR'S MURDER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 16, 2018

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Monterey county District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today a negotiated disposition in the murder of Pastor Herbert Valero. After six days of jury trial and with the jury out deliberating, Servando Silva, age 39, and a resident of Salinas entered a plea of guilty to the second-degree murder of Pastor Valero as well as a felony assault on his brother, Fernando Silva. Defendant also admitted a prior strike conviction, the use of a deadly weapon used during the course of the murder and a 5 year violent prior felony enhancement. Defendant will be sentenced by Judge Pamela Butler to 38 years to life on April 20, 2018.

On March 14, 2017 in Salinas, CA at approximately 5 p.m., in violation of his felony probation terms, Servando Silva violently confronted his brother Fernando Silva while armed with a screwdriver.

Three hours later at approximately 8 pm, Silva arrived at 1502 Verona Court, the residence of Pastor Herbert Valero and his wife Margo Valero, to meet with the Pastor. Within minutes, while the Pastor was mid-sentence stating he was “[Silva’s] friend and that he could help,” Silva stabbed the pastor in the neck with a drywall saw blade, puncturing his carotid artery and jugular vein. Silva fled as Pastor Valero retreated into his residence where dying he declared to his wife Margo Valero and daughter Vivian Mucha that “Serv stabbed me.” Pastor Valero died in his home within minutes as his wife held a towel to his neck and first responders began to arrive.

Later that day Salinas police officers apprehended Silva at his sister’s home in Salinas. Prior to his arrest, Silva told his sister that, “I just stabbed the Pastor in the neck.”

The evidence at trial established that Silva suffered from mental delusions which motivated his attack on Pastor Valero. The agreed disposition ensures Silva will serve a term of at least 38 years up to the rest of his life in prison, with no opportunity to appeal to overturn his plea and sentence.

This case was investigated by members of the Salinas Police Department, most notably Detective Byron Gansen.