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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **CASTROVILLE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FALSELY REPORTING BOMB THREATS AT NORTH MONTEREY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL AND SALINAS COURTHOUSE**

*People v. Ruben Torres, 19CR002731*

**SALINAS**, California- Monterey County District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni announced that yesterday Ruben Torres, a 29-year-old resident of Castroville, entered pleas of no contest to two felony counts of falsely reporting bomb threats.

On May 25, 2017, Torres called 911 from an untraceable phone and told dispatch there was a bomb on the campus of North Monterey County High School. The campus was immediately placed on lockdown. Over 1,000 students and nearly 50 staff members were evacuated from the campus for two hours while law enforcement searched for explosive devices. At the time, Torres was employed as a security guard at the school.

On March 11, 2019, Torres called 911 and told dispatchers “there’s a bomb at the Salinas Courthouse.” Moments later, he called a second time and said “10 minutes, Salinas Courthouse will no longer be there.” He then called a third time, asking dispatch: “How good is your bomb squad?” As a result of his calls, the Salinas Courthouse and surrounding county offices were evacuated. The bomb squad searched the facility for hours, deploying two canines, but did not find an explosive device. Hundreds of county employees and jurors were displaced while the facility was cleared.

On March 12, 2019, Torres called 911 twice, once to report an active shooter at the Salinas Courthouse, and the second time to report there was “a bomb at one of two places, Salinas

Courthouse or Lincoln Elementary School.” County offices were again evacuated as law enforcement searched in vain for an explosive device.

Over the last several years, places where Torres worked received bomb or shooting threats during Torres’ employment there. Bomb or shooting threats were made to Denny’s in Monterey where Torres worked as a manager, the Monterey County Probation Department where he worked as an intern, Walmart where he worked as a security guard, and the Natividad Medical Center where he also worked as a security guard.

Torres will be sentenced on July 23, 2019, by the Honorable Mark E. Hood. Torres, who has no prior record, will be placed on felony probation for six years and will serve approximately one year in custody.

This case was investigated by District Attorney Investigator Jennifer Mendoza and Detective Mike Smith with the Monterey County Sheriff’s Office. Other agencies, including the Salinas Police Department, the Monterey Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, provided significant assistance in this investigation.