



Riverside County District Attorney

CRIMINAL CASE UPDATE

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For Immediate Release
Oct. 18, 2013

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MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON WITHOUT PAROLE FOR THE 2011 MURDER OF A VICTIM HE LURED OUT THROUGH A FAKE FACEBOOK PROFILE

RIVERSIDE – Today, Oct. 18, 2013, a man was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the 2011 murder of a Hemet man lured out through a fake Facebook profile created by the killer.

Manuel Edmundo Guzman Jr., DOB: 1-30-94, of San Jacinto, was sentenced in case SWF1201043 by Judge Michael Donner at the Hall of Justice in Riverside. Before rendering the sentence, the judge called the murder a “thrill kill” of a completely random victim.

Guzman read a statement to the court for about an hour before he was sentenced, in which he admitted committing the murder.

On Feb. 20, 2013, a Riverside County jury convicted Guzman of murdering 23-year-old Eddie Leal of San Jacinto. The eight-man, four-woman jury deliberated slightly less than one full day before coming back with their verdicts.

Guzman was convicted of one count of murder with a special circumstance allegation of lying in wait as well as personally using a firearm. The defendant was 17 at the time of the murder so he was not eligible for the death penalty. Because he was a juvenile at the time of the murder, Guzman faced a sentence of either life in prison without the possibility of parole or 50 years to life.

Guzman created a fake online “profile” on the social network website Facebook using the fake persona of “Rebecca Santhiago.” (NOTE: That spelling of the last name is correct.) Guzman used photos of an east coast Internet model in that fake profile. Guzman then used that fake profile in attempts to lure out young men.

On May, 30, 2011, Guzman used the fake profile to successfully lure Leal to meet someone the victim believed to be Rebecca Santhiago at a park in the area of Ivy Crest Drive in San Jacinto. Leal was found in the driver’s seat of a Toyota Corolla that came to rest along Roanoke Street after the vehicle hit a parked car. He had been shot multiple times.