



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**INDIO MAN SENTENCED TO 141 YEARS TO LIFE FOR THE ATTEMPTED  
MURDER OF AN INDIO POLICE SERGEANT AND A ROBBERY IN LA QUINTA**

**INDIO** – An Indio man has been sentenced to 141 years to life in prison for several 2012 crimes including the attempted murder of an Indio police sergeant and the robbery of a dry cleaning business in La Quinta.

Eddie Joseph Rivera, DOB: 3-26-80, was sentenced on Friday, June 26, 2015, by Riverside County Superior Court Judge Graham Cribbs at the Larson Justice Center in Indio. On May 22, 2015, a Riverside County jury found Rivera guilty of several felonies including attempted murder of a peace officer, robbery, and attempted robbery. Jurors found that he personally used a firearm and Rivera also has three previous robbery convictions in Riverside County.

“We are pleased by the verdict of the jury and the significant sentence handed down by the judge in this matter,” Indio Police Chief Richard Twiss said on Monday, June 29, 2015.

On Nov. 26, 2012, a man attempted to rob a clothing store on Highway 111 in Indio but left without taking any money. A surveillance camera near the location provided law enforcement officers with a photo of the robber. Later that day, a robbery was reported at a dry cleaning business on Highway 111 in La Quinta during which the robber gave a note to an employee demanding cash or she would be shot. The robber fled with about \$80.

Three days later, on Nov. 29, 2012, Indio police Sgt. Jeff Merritt spotted a man matching the suspect in the surveillance photo in front of a grocery store near Madison and Highway 111 in Indio. The man was still wearing the same clothes as described in the two earlier crimes. Believing it to be the wanted suspect, Merritt kept an eye on him and called for backup. At one point the suspect started walking out of the shopping center and toward Merritt. The man lifted his shirt, pulled a handgun from his waistband, and fired numerous rounds at Merritt – who was not hit by the gunfire. The sergeant returned fire and the suspect, later identified as Rivera, was struck in the neck and survived his injuries.

On March 27, 2014, the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office found no criminal culpability on the part of Sgt. Merritt.

The case, INF1202934, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Anthony Fimbres of the DA’s Gang and Crimes Against Peace Officers Unit.

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