



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Ventura Gang Member Sentenced for 2012 Murder

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Gilbert Villanueva (DOB 11/20/94), of Ventura, was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for the 2012 murder of 14-year-old Joshua Angel Burciaga. Villanueva pled guilty on May 3, 2024, to one count of first-degree murder. He also admitted to the special allegation that the crime was committed for the benefit of a criminal street gang.

On the night of June 27, 2012, Villanueva and co-defendant Justin Patino went to Saticoy Park, in Saticoy. Joshua Burciaga and his friends also went to the park that night. Looking for revenge after injuries to a fellow gang member, Villanueva and Patino covered their faces with bandanas as they approached Joshua. Recognizing Joshua, both Villanueva and Patino pulled out revolvers and fired at him as he tried to flee. Villanueva and Patino chased Joshua and continued to fire at him until he fell to the ground. Villanueva and Patino stood over him and fired additional shots as Joshua begged for his life. Both defendants fled and attempted to conceal and destroy evidence linking them to the murder.

Young Joshua was pronounced dead at the scene. The Medical Examiner's report later found he suffered multiple gunshot wounds. Two of those wounds were to the head at close range.

On July 16, 2012, Villanueva was arrested for the murder of Joshua. The two murder weapons were found buried at a ranch in Santa Paula, wrapped in the bandanas both men wore on the night of the shooting.

Although Villanueva was 17 years old at the time of the crime, prosecutors successfully argued that the case should be transferred to adult court.

"We are grateful to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office for their thorough investigation of this case," Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney Tom Dunlevy said. "We hope that the defendant's

sentence provides some sense of closure to the victim’s family after so many years and allows them to continue the healing process.”

Senior Deputy District Attorney Cynthia Nguyen, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office Major Crimes Homicide Unit, prosecuted the case.

Patino, also 17 years old when the murder happened, was arrested for the crime on October 3, 2012, as he was being released from a juvenile facility on unrelated charges. Patino was convicted by a Ventura County jury on March 16, 2018, and sentenced to 50 years to life in prison for the murder of Joshua Burciaga.

Case: 2013013039

Defendant Information:

Gilbert Villanueva (DOB 11/20/94)
Ventura

Charges pled guilty to:

- PC 187(a) - Murder

Special Allegations:

- PC 186.22(b)(1) – Street terrorism

