



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

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Salinas Man Pleads Guilty to 2021 Murder of Ex-Wife

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Josefino Cayetano Maldonado (DOB 12/13/79), of Salinas, pled guilty on March 25, 2025, to the second-degree murder of Eudelia Gonzalez. Maldonado also admitted to the special allegation that he used a deadly weapon to commit the crime. He is expected to be sentenced to 16 years to life in state prison. Under California law, a conviction for second-degree murder carries a sentence of 15 years to life. Additionally, the special allegation of personally using a deadly weapon increases the sentence by one year.

On the night of July 10, 2021, Ms. Gonzalez left a party and later met with Maldonado, her ex-husband. They had been separated for eight years. The two traveled up Potrero Road near Newbury Park, where they stopped at a park before heading toward Oxnard. During the drive, Maldonado asked the victim to reconcile their relationship, but she refused.

Around 12:30 a.m. on July 11, 2021, Maldonado pulled over near East Hueneme Road. While both were outside the vehicle, he struck Ms. Gonzalez in the head multiple times with a rock, leaving her incapacitated. He then placed her in his vehicle and drove north of Santa Barbara near Gaviota. Maldonado placed a plastic bag over her head and wrapped her head in a sweatshirt before dumping her body down a steep embankment alongside the US 101 freeway.

The victim's 17-year-old daughter reported her missing after the victim failed to return home and report to work. Oxnard Police detectives initially questioned the defendant, who denied seeing the victim and claimed he had not been in Ventura County. However, phone records later revealed he was in the area at the time of the crime. Confronted with this evidence, Maldonado ultimately admitted to the killing and later led detectives to the location of her body in Santa Barbara County.

“My hope is this plea and eventual sentence will help the victim’s family find the long-awaited closure they have been patiently waiting for,” said Senior Deputy District Attorney Tom Steele, who prosecuted the case.

Maldonado is scheduled to be sentenced on April 22, 2025, at 9 a.m. in courtroom 48 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He remains in custody without bail.

Case: 2021018550

Defendant Information:

Josefino Cayetano Maldonado (DOB 12/13/79)
Salinas

Charges:

- PC 187(a) – Second-degree murder

Special allegations:

- PC 12022(b)(1) – Use of deadly weapon (rock)

