



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

3/19/19

**LIFE SENTENCE HANDED DOWN IN TULARE GROCERY STORE
GANG SHOOTING**

Today in Department 10 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Judge Kathryn Montejano sentenced Paul Castro, age 22, to 82 years-to-life in prison for a 2015 gang shooting at the Foods Co. grocery store in Tulare that seriously wounded two victims. On January 25, 2019, Castro was convicted of three counts of attempted murder with the special allegations of using a gun and that the crime was committed for the benefit of a gang, three counts of assault with a deadly weapon, and the special allegation of street terrorism.

At the same trial, co-defendant Isaiah Castro, age 20, was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon (knife) with the special allegation of street terrorism. He is scheduled to be sentenced on March 29 and faces up to 9 years in state prison. Co-defendant Gonzalo Gonzalez, age 21, was convicted of attempted murder with the special allegation that the crime was committed for the benefit of a gang, assault with a deadly weapon (knife), and the special allegation of street terrorism. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison on March 8.

In the evening of May 6, 2015, Tulare Police Department officers were dispatched to the store for a report of shots fired. Officers found two victims, a store employee and a customer, shot in the chest.

Investigation determined that prior to the shooting, Paul Castro made the mistaken assumption that one of the victims was a rival gang member simply because he was wearing blue sandals. An argument between Castro and the victim ensued in the parking lot. Abraham Gonzalez and Gonzalo Gonzalez joined with Castro at the front of the store

and assaulted the victim, who was able to fight them off. Isaiah Castro and Antonio Sanchez came up from inside the store behind the victim, with Castro hitting him in the back of the head. The group then continued their assault. Gonzalo Gonzalez produced a knife and attempted to stab the victim, but was again fought off. During the assault, the group shouted gang slurs at the victim. The victim was able to push the group outside the store when Paul Castro drew a gun and shot the victim in the chest and a store employee who was trying to break up the assault. The assailants fled in Esperanza Rangel's vehicle, but were taken in to custody hours later. Much of the incident was captured on the store's video surveillance. At the time of the crime, Isaiah Castro, Gonzalo Gonzalez, and Antonio Sanchez were juveniles.

On January 14, 2016, Antonio Sanchez, age 21, pleaded guilty to assault to cause great bodily injury with the special allegation of street terrorism. He was sentenced to four years in state prison.

On April 19, 2016, Abraham Gonzalez, age 26, pleaded no contest to assault with a deadly weapon and with the special allegation of street terrorism. He was sentenced to 10 years in state prison.

On January 27, 2016, Esperanza Rangel, age 25, pleaded no contest to accessory after the fact with the special allegation of street terrorism. She was sentenced to 90 days in jail.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Benjamin Taksa of the Major Crimes Division and investigated by Detective Ray Guerrero of the Tulare Police Department.

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