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Cold case homicide results in convictions, prison sentences for two men

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced Ramon Gonzalez, 38, and Luis Gonzalez, 44, pleaded and were convicted of causing the death of Pedro Valenzuela on July 28, 2001. Pedro's brother, Luis Valenzuela, was also shot during the incident but survived his injuries.

"I want you to know that you took away a father, a son, and an uncle who will never get to see his daughter graduate, have kids, [or] get married," Vanessa Brown, Pedro Valenzuela's former girlfriend, said during Ramon Gonzalez' sentencing hearing. "You took that all away. I want you to feel the pain that I feel. ...I hope that God has mercy on you for what you did."

"This is a difficult and somber day," said Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Nan Waller, who presided over both hearings. "The words and the actions that I do today cannot erase the pain that you have."

On July 31, 2018, Ramon Gonzalez pleaded guilty to one count each of manslaughter in the first degree and assault in the first degree. Today, he received a 17 year prison sentence.

Luis Gonzalez pleaded guilty today to one count each of manslaughter in the first degree and assault in the first degree. As stated on the record, Luis Gonzalez will be formally sentenced on September 19, 2018 at 4 p.m before Judge Waller where he will receive a 13 year prison sentence.

Ramon Gonzalez addressed the Court and Mr. Valenzeula's family during his sentencing. He apologized for his actions and described himself as a "troubled" young man who was gang involved when he shot and killed Mr. Valenzeula.

"There's nothing that I could say that could make this any better," Ramon Gonzalez said. "It was never my intention to hurt anyone. ...I want to apologize again for the hurt that I've caused your family. "

According to information previously released by the Portland Police Bureau, this investigation started on July 28, 2001, at approximately 11:50 pm, when officers responded to the intersection of Southeast 82nd Avenue and Powell Boulevard on the report of a shooting.

Officers arrived and started talking with witnesses who told police that shots were fired, from another vehicle, into a minivan traveling southbound on SE 82nd and struck the occupants inside. Witnesses reported the shooter was in the vehicle directly behind the minivan.

A short time later, the victims arrived at a nearby hospital where Pedro Valenzuela, 19, was pronounced dead as a result of gunshot wounds sustained during the shooting.

The criminal case was immediately assigned to the Portland Police Bureau's Homicide Detail. During the initial investigation, detectives were able to develop leads, but the case went cold. Eventually, the file was turned over to the Portland Police Bureau's Cold Case Homicide Unit. Detectives assigned to that unit were able to develop leads that resulted in the identification of Ramon Gonzalez and Luis Gonzalez as being responsible for Valenzeula's death.

"Throughout the negotiations, and with the Court's assistance, we were able to negotiate an outcome that falls in line with other cases," said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Shawn Overstreet, who prosecuted this case. "The State believes that this is the appropriate outcome that holds [the defendants] accountable."

Luis Gonzalez also addressed the Court and Valenzeula's family and admitted he was the driver of the other vehicle involved in the shooting.

"First of all, I want to ask for forgiveness," Luis Gonzalez said in court. "I'm here as a new person and I hope this can bring you some justice and comfort."

Vanessa Brown thanked Luis Gonzalez for coming forward and being willing to speak with detectives about this case.

"I've been waiting for this day," Brown said. "Thank you for bringing closure to our family."

Ramon Gonzalez and Luis Felipe Gonzalez are not related.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office has a close partnership with the Portland Police Bureau Cold Case Homicide Unit Office and the Oregon State Police Crime Lab.

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