



NEWS RELEASE

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Man Sentenced to Life in Prison for Murder of Commerce City Jewelry Store Owner

Anton Valdez (DOB 11/06/90) was sentenced to life in prison without parole plus 32 years Friday in the murder of a Commerce City jewelry store owner.

Valdez was convicted Wednesday of first-degree murder, aggravated robbery and conspiracy in the death of Bernardo Saenz-Perches, who was shot to death May 17, 2012 during a robbery of La Joyeria Alondra jewelry store at 5908 E. 64th Ave. in Commerce City.

Adams County District Judge Thomas Ensor sentenced Valdez to life in prison without parole for first-degree murder after deliberation. The judge imposed an additional 32-year sentence for aggravated robbery which will be served consecutive to the life sentence. He imposed a 16-year sentence for conspiracy to be served concurrently.

"This was a crime motivated by greed and callous depravity," Chief Deputy District Attorney Patrick Costigan told the court. "Anton Valdez walked into a business owned by a respected member of the community, a family man and father of three young daughters, and gunned him down, all to steal some trinkets -- some gold bracelets. The defendant killed this man for nothing in the most brutal and callous way."

According to evidence presented during the trial which began Monday, a getaway car with Valdez and two other men drove up to the store. Surveillance video showed Valdez, who was armed with a handgun, and another man, who was carrying a crowbar, get out of the car and enter the store. Saenz was shot four times at close range when he came to the front of the store from a back room in the store after he heard a glass jewelry case being smashed.

Valdez was convicted based on surveillance video and DNA evidence from blood left on a bracelet at the store. The other two men have not been apprehended. Valdez was convicted as charged with first-degree murder after deliberation, first-degree felony murder, two counts of aggravated robbery and two counts of conspiracy to commit aggravated robbery.

"This was a tragic case," said District Attorney Dave Young. "Bernardo Saenz was a father, son, brother and respected member of the community, and he was needlessly killed. We are thankful for the jury's verdict that brings justice to the loss of this man."