



NEWS RELEASE

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Public Information

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Teen Sentenced to 36 Years in Stabbing Death

Matthew James Trujillo, DOB 09/04/96, was sentenced to 36 years in prison Thursday for second-degree murder (F2) in the stabbing death of Anthony Benavidez, 18, on January 4, 2014.

Trujillo was charged as an adult. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in January and faced a stipulated sentence of from 16 to 48 years under the plea agreement. He initially was charged with first-degree murder, which carries a life sentence without parole.

Adams County District Judge Thomas Ensor sentenced Trujillo to serve 36 years in prison.

According to court records, Trujillo lured Benavidez to a nearby basketball court after becoming angry about Benavidez having contact with his sister and his girlfriend. The two met in a park near the 4200 block of East 100th Avenue. Trujillo was armed with metallic knuckles with a built-in blade and stabbed Benavidez in the throat. He died in the arms of his mother, who had gone to the park looking for him and saw the stabbing.

"I never met Anthony Benavidez, but if he is half the person his parents are, society has suffered a great loss," Chief Deputy District Attorney Joseph S. Pacyga told the court, asking that the maximum 48-year sentence be imposed.

Teresa Benavidez spoke at the sentencing hearing, telling the judge that she had gone to the park to find her son and saw him be ambushed and stabbed in the neck. She said she ran to her son and frantically tried to stop the bleeding as Anthony told her, "Help me, Mommy." He died in her arms.

"This was a senseless killing," said District Attorney Dave Young. "The defendant planned this, lured the victim to a dark park and murdered Anthony as his horrified mother, who trying to find her son, came upon the scene. I am hopeful that this sentence will bring a sense of justice to the victim's family."

Trujillo's father, Brian Carl Trujillo (DOB 05/13/74) also is charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor (F4), tampering with physical evidence (F4) and accessory to crime (F5). His trial is set for June 15.

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