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# Press Release

**For Immediate Release**

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## DEFENDANT GIVEN MAXIMUM SENTENCE ALLOWED BY LAW

Danny Diaz pled guilty today, May 24, 2016, to the murders of Vanessa Gonzales and Ashley Garcia. He was sentenced to serve life in prison for each murder and those sentences were ordered to run consecutively. Mr. Diaz therefore must complete one life sentence before starting to serve the second life sentence.

On May 14, 2015, the defendant and Vanessa Gonzales, his girlfriend at the time, were last seen leaving together in her car. About 7:30 a.m. the next morning, Vanessa was found dead on Weedon Loop by a passerby. The medical exam concluded that Vanessa had suffered incapacitating trauma to the head and was then run over. Brazos County Sheriff's Deputies located her wrecked vehicle a little less than a mile away, with blood on the exterior.

While searching for the defendant, authorities learned that he had gone to

Ashley Garcia's home that morning. Ashley was the Aunt of the defendant's daughter. Ashley allowed the defendant to clean up at her home, and eventually gave him a ride into town. They left about 8:30 a.m.

The defendant was arrested at about 11:00 am off Pleasant Hill Road, in possession of Ashley's vehicle. Finally at just after 1:00 pm Ashley's body was located about a quarter mile away from the place of the defendant's arrest. The medical exam confirmed that Ashley had suffered a brutal and sustained attack with multiple lacerations and sharp force injuries resulting in her death.

The defendant was indicted for each murder and faced a maximum of life in prison on each case. A trial to determine whether the defendant was mentally competent to stand trial was set for June 12, 2017. Mr. Diaz had a history of



**Danny Diaz**

mental health issues including diagnoses for possible bipolar disorder and more recently schizophrenia. He had been seen by several mental health treatment facilities. Assuming the defendant was found competent, the jury trial was set for November of 2017.

The sentence imposed requires the defendant to take the maximum penalty allowed by law for each of these murder cases. The defendant also waived his right to appeal, and will not be eligible for parole consideration until and if he reaches 90 years of age.

"The senseless and heinous actions by this defendant devastated so many lives. Regardless of the mental health issues and demons Mr. Diaz was grappling with, he took two mothers from this world, and must suffer the consequences for his actions."

**-Jarvis Parsons, District Attorney**