

**News Release from  
The Honorable Sandra Doorley  
Monroe County District Attorney**

March 23, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Douglas Smith Convicted of Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree**

Rochester, NY- Thursday, March 23, 2023, a Monroe County Jury convicted 33-year-old Douglas Smith of Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree and Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree for the murder of 16-year-old Manuel Rivera.

On August 7, 2021, around 7:20PM, Douglas Smith approached a cookout at a residence on Hague Street in the City of Rochester. A stranger to those at the cookout, Douglas Smith engaged in a verbal altercation. Johnny Rodriguez, a guest at the cookout, stepped in, both men drew their illegally possessed pistols, and engaged in a gun battle. 16-year-old Manuel Rivera, an innocent attendee at the party, was shot and killed by Douglas Smith.

After a swift and thorough investigation, the Rochester Police Department arrested both Douglas Smith and Johnny Rodriguez for Manuel Rivera's murder and for Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree. Johnny Rodriguez was only indicted for Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree and pled guilty to the indictment on March 13, 2023, the day before trial.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Robin Catalano, Chief of the Special Investigations Bureau, and Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Jirik, also of the Special Investigations Bureau.

"At what was supposed to be a care-free party with friends, Douglas Smith violently killed Manuel Rivera, and could have killed many more," said Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Jirik. "I want to thank the Rochester Police Department's Major Crimes Unit for their detailed investigation, and the cooperation of Manuel's friends who were willing to come forward with information, resulting in the successful prosecution of both Douglas Smith and Johnny Rodriguez. Our community is safer with Douglas Smith incarcerated."

"Manuel Rivera was a 16-year-old innocent bystander with his entire life ahead of him," said District Attorney Sandra Doorley. "Douglas Smith did not give Manuel's life, or anyone's life, consideration when he drew a weapon and began shooting. Even though they will never get their loved one back, it is our hope that the family and friends of Manuel Rivera all feel a sense of justice in today's verdict."

Douglas Smith will be sentenced on May 30th, in front of New York State Supreme Court Justice Schiano. Johnny Rodriguez will be sentenced on July 10, also in front of New York State Supreme Court Justice Schiano.

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