

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

August 14, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Douglas Smith Sentenced to 25 Years to Life

Rochester, NY- Monday, August 14, 2023, New York State Supreme Court Justice Schiano sentenced 33-year-old Douglas Smith to 25 years to Life in the New York State Department of Corrections for the murder of 16-year-old Manuel Rivera. Douglas Smith was convicted by a Monroe County jury of Murder in the 2nd Degree and Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd Degree.

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 2nd Degree. Johnny Rodriguez was only indicted for Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd Degree and pled guilty to the indictment on March 13, 2023, the day before trial. Johnny Rodriguez will be sentenced on August 28, 2023, in front of New York State Supreme Court Justice Schiano.

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

"Manuel Rivera was an innocent 16-year-old boy before Douglas Smith killed him in a senseless act of violence," said Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Jirik. "I want to thank the Rochester Police Department for their detailed investigation, especially the Major Crimes Unit. I also want to commend Manuel's friends who were willing to come forward with information, resulting in today's appropriate life sentence. Our community is safer with Douglas Smith incarcerated."

"At 16 years old, Manuel Rivera was at a party with friends, enjoying life," said District Attorney Sandra Doorley. "Douglas Smith cut Manuel's young life short when he drew a weapon and began shooting at Johnny Rodriguez, also risking the lives of everyone in attendance. Manuel was a son, a brother, and a friend. This young man had his entire life ahead of him. While nothing can bring him back to life, it is our hope that Manuel Rivera's family can find justice in today's outcome."

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