



DenverDA

Mitchell R. Morrissey, District Attorney - Second Judicial District
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 801, Denver, CO 80202

Bus. Phone: 720-913-9000
Fax: 720-913-9035

NEWS RELEASE

June 16, 2014

Contact: Lynn Kimbrough, 720-913-9025

JUVENILE CO-DEFENDANT IN MURDER CASE TO BE RELEASED

One of two juveniles convicted in connection with the murder of a beloved special education teacher in 2000 has had his murder conviction vacated and pleaded guilty to being an accessory to the crime.

Lorenzo Montoya (dob: 02-10-85) was convicted of first-degree felony murder, aggravated robbery and first-degree burglary in the beating death of 29-year-old Emily Johnson, a teacher at Skinner Middle School in northwest Denver. He was 14 at the time of the murder, and was accused of accompanying 16-year-old co-defendant Nicholas Martinez (08-16-83) in what began as an effort to steal Johnson's car but ended in her murder.

Lawyers for Montoya filed a motion with the Court requesting a new trial based on allegations that he had ineffective counsel at the time. The Denver DA's Office reviewed the allegations and in consultation with Emily's family, the original prosecutors on the case and others involved in the investigation, determined that allowing Montoya to plead guilty to being accessory was in the interest of justice. Specifically, Emily's family noted that they wanted to speak with Emily's voice and heart, and that she would want Montoya to have another chance.

Montoya pleaded guilty this morning to being an accessory and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. As he has already served 13 years and 7 months, the Court directed that Montoya be released immediately.