



# Tigard Police Department

## Media Release

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13125 SW Hall Boulevard | Tigard, Oregon 97223 | [www.tigard-or.gov/police](http://www.tigard-or.gov/police)

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### **Guilty Verdict Stemming From 1999 Homicide**

After a lengthy investigation led by Tigard Police, a Mexican man was sentenced to life imprisonment for the stabbing death of Maria Garcia Leonardo, outside a Tigard fast-food restaurant in 1999. In the weeks immediately following the homicide, Tigard investigators had issued a murder warrant identifying Efrain Sanchez Diaz, who at the time was known as Luis Hernandez Diaz as the primary and only suspect. After months of searching, it became apparent that Diaz had likely fled to Mexico where he remained out of reach for over a decade. In subsequent years there were several attempts to locate and arrest Diaz, however governmental roadblocks suggested little hope of resolving the case in Oregon.

In 2007, the investigation dialogue between the United States and Mexico took a dramatic shift which resulted in Tigard Police successfully filing an affidavit in support of a Mexican Provisional Arrest Warrant (PAW) for the arrest of Efrain Sanchez Diaz for the crime of murder. In 2013, six years later, Mexico ultimately issued the warrant. The search for Diaz ended in 2015 when he was located and arrested in Acapulco. Ten months later and lengthy court hearings by affidavit, Diaz was extradited to the United States, carried out by U.S. Marshalls. The case was quickly set for trial in Washington County.

On February 9, 2017, the trial concluded with a jury unanimously finding Diaz guilty of murder. A Washington County judge sentenced 47 year-old Diaz to life in prison. Although the 18 year-long investigation was riddled with delays and complexities as a result of unexpected bureaucratic obstacles; Tigard Police investigators remained focused. The investigation also revealed remarkable dedication and professionalism by numerous law enforcement and criminal justice personnel. Adding to that was the impressive response from the Tigard community who not only stepped forward after the crime to share information with authorities, but also eighteen years later many remained committed in their reach for justice surrounding the case. Tigard Police would like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved with the investigation. Additional information regarding the prosecution can be found at: <http://www.co.washington.or.us/DistrictAttorney/News/man-held-accountable.cfm>

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