



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
LARRY V. GONZALEZ
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

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ARREST MADE IN HOME INVASION MURDER OF ELDERLY WOMAN

Riverside, CA – On Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at approximately 7:15 p.m., Riverside Police Officers responded to a home in the 200 block of E. Manfield Street, located in the University neighborhood of Riverside, to check the welfare of an elderly resident. Family members from out of town called our Public Safety Communications Center to check on their elderly relative who lived by herself and was not answering their calls. Officers arrived and found a broken window as they were checking the rear of the house. They also observed some items that appeared to be out of place and consistent with a burglary. They decided to gain access to the house and once inside, found an elderly female victim deceased in an apparent homicide. She has been identified as 78 year-old Denise Irene Wong of Riverside.

Detectives with the Robbery – Homicide Unit, along with Specialists from the Forensics Unit, responded and assumed the investigation. They have been assisted by the Riverside County Sheriff-Coroner's Office and CAL-ID Office, Riverside County District Attorney's Office, and the Riverside Police Department's Crime Analysis Unit.

The preliminary investigation revealed the victim was murdered during a home invasion robbery hours earlier and her vehicle was stolen. Investigators were able to determine the victim's vehicle was involved in a hit and run collision in the city of Indio the same day. The suspect fled the collision, but the vehicle was impounded as a result. Based on evidence collected at the scene and vehicle, detectives were quickly able to identify the person suspected in these crimes.

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The Riverside County District Attorney's Gang Impact Team (GIT) was requested to assist in the investigation and immediately began searching for the suspect in the Coachella Valley area.



Detectives and GIT Task Force members worked tirelessly over the next few days to develop and pursue leads to determine the suspect's whereabouts. On the night of January 9th, they learned the suspect was recently arrested and booked into Imperial County jail for attempted car theft.



Sixto Jesus Garcia Pena, 19 years –old from Palm Springs, was transferred from Imperial County jail yesterday and booked into the Southwest Detention Center for murder, home invasion robbery, and burglary. He is currently being held without bail.

Riverside Police Chief Larry Gonzalez stated *“this was a random act of cowardice to one of our more vulnerable community members that should have never happened. But now our focus turns to supporting the forthcoming prosecution and standing with the victim's family in their pursuit of justice.”*

A statement on behalf of the victim's family reads:

“Denise Irene Wong was a loving mother, grandmother, sister, friend, and a good and kind person. A 50-year resident of Riverside, she also loved her city and her community. We are shocked and heartbroken over her passing. But, we will always remember her warmth, generosity, and smile. We take heart in knowing she lived a life filled with love, faith, and devotion to her family.



We want to thank the Riverside Police Department officers and detectives for the diligence and dedication they devoted to this matter. We also want to thank our friends and colleagues for the outpouring of support they have given us.

At this time, we need time and privacy to process our loss and to grieve our loved one. However, feel free to join our prayers for justice and peace.”

This homicide investigation is still ongoing and there are no further details to release at this time. Anyone with additional information regarding this suspect or incident is urged to contact Detective Dave Riedeman at (951) 353-7104 or driedeman@riversideca.gov. Those wishing to remain anonymous can email rpdtips@riversideca.gov or utilize the Riverside Police Department's mobile app “Submit a Tip” feature while referencing report number 210000507.