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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 29, 2014

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KILLER OF TEEN GIRL SENTENCED TO 34 YEARS

On Thursday, May 29, 2014, Joe Manuel Alvarado, 29, of Ennis, Texas was sentenced to 34 years in prison for murder as part of plea bargain agreement in the 40th Judicial District Court. He was also sentenced to 20 years in prison for Tampering with Evidence. Alvarado pled guilty to murdering 15-year old Moriah Gonzales in March of 2012. Moriah's burned body was found by a passerby in the area of Knighthurst Street in Ennis in the early morning hours of March 17, 2012. Alvarado and another suspect, Jennifer Puente, were tracked down by police to Grand Prairie, where Alvarado ultimately turned himself in and provided the police with a written statement. Puente has yet to be apprehended. Moriah's parents gave victim impact statements in which they told Alvarado that he had killed them from the inside. They also told him that they forgive him for what he did, and they hoped that God would forgive him too.

Video and audio statements that Alvarado gave to the police were entered into the court record. At the time of the plea Alvarado testified that Puente "had greater involvement" in the murder than he did, and that he was a passive participant. Alvarado also agreed to testify against Puente when she is apprehended.

(photo on page 2)

