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# Press Release

For Immediate Release

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## Woman Sentenced to 27 Years for Murder

GALVESTON – Yesterday Claudia Kristine Esquivel, 23, was sentenced to 27 years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and fined \$10,000 by a jury for the felony offense of Murder.

On Monday, March 7, 2016, trial began in the 212th District Court. The State presented witness testimony and physical evidence that at 3:56 am on June 16, 2014, a 911 call was placed by Esquivel's mother to the Galveston Police Department. Esquivel's mother tells police that her daughter needed assistance because she was being assaulted by the victim, Christopher Chapa. Police arrived at the home of Esquivel and Chapa and found Chapa lying on the floor, unconscious, with a gunshot wound to the head. EMS was called to the home and Chapa was taken to UTMB where he later died from his injury.

Trial testimony revealed the couple had been in a three year relationship and resided together at a home in Galveston. In 2013, Esquivel completed the police academy but was not, at the time, a certified police officer. Investigators learned during their investigation that on the night of the shooting the couple had been arguing and Chapa was preparing to leave the residence. As the argument escalated, Esquivel fired one shot, hitting Chapa in the head. The investigation also showed that the shooting occurred prior to Esquivel's mother calling 911 and that Esquivel, herself, never called 911 but called her mother instead. During the 911 call by Esquivel's mother there was no mention of the shooting nor was there any request for medical help for Chapa.

The jury heard closing arguments Monday morning, returning around 3:15 pm with a guilty verdict. Esquivel faced a punishment range of 5 to 99 years, or Life in prison for the first degree felony offense. Probation, in lieu of prison, was not a punishment sentence available to the jury. During punishment, Chapa's mother testified that he was "the rock of the family" and that he "had a bright future." Assistant District Attorney Beverly Armstrong told the jury, during closing, that this case was a tragedy for both sides but unlike Esquivel's mother, Christopher Chapa's mother would never again be able to see her son.

Shortly after 6:00 pm, the jury returned with a punishment verdict of 27 years confinement and a \$10,000 fine. Esquivel will not be eligible for parole until at least half, about 13.5 years, of her sentence has been served.

Esquivel was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Beverly Armstrong and Gina Gilmore, in the 212th District Court, with Judge Patricia Grady presiding. The investigation was conducted by the Criminal Investigations Division of the Galveston Police Department.

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