



October 28, 2026

CONTACT: Taylor Long, Public Information Officer
tlong@fresnocountyca.gov
559-600-4334

ASHTON HENRY DEJEAN, III SENTENCED TO 51 YEARS TO LIFE FOR THE MURDER OF MANUEL LOPEZ, JR.

Today, October 28, 2026, Ashton Henry Dejean, III (44, of Fresno) was sentenced to 51 years to life in state prison for the first-degree murder of Manuel Lopez, Jr. (45, of Fresno). Fresno County Superior Court Judge Monica Diaz imposed the sentence following a jury's guilty verdict and true finding on the allegation that Dejean personally used a deadly weapon during the murder, returned on July 27, 2026. The sentence includes 50 years to life for the murder conviction, doubled due to a prior strike conviction, plus one year for the deadly weapon enhancement.

On October 31, 2025, Dejean and Lopez were among several individuals gathered in a parking lot near a Carl's Jr. and a United States Postal Service office near the intersection of Blackstone and Griffith avenues in Fresno. Dejean approached Lopez and appeared to initiate a confrontation. He attempted to kick Lopez and struck at him with a drinking tumbler. When Lopez attempted to defend himself, Dejean retrieved a knife and stabbed him repeatedly.

Lopez called for help and attempted to flee but collapsed on the sidewalk. Dejean initially walked away before returning to stab Lopez again as he lay on the ground. Despite lifesaving efforts by Fresno Police officers and emergency medical personnel, Lopez died at the hospital. An autopsy determined that Lopez suffered 16 stab wounds.

Following the attack, Dejean entered the nearby Carl's Jr. and went into the restroom, where he left his bloodstained sweatshirt and the knife used in the attack. Responding officers later recovered both items. Dejean was subsequently located, arrested, and booked into the Fresno County Jail.

Following the jury's verdict, the court found true an allegation that Dejean had a prior strike conviction for assault with a deadly weapon in a 2020 Fresno County Superior Court case. Dejean has five prior felony convictions.

Under California's Elderly Parole Program, Dejean is expected to become eligible for parole consideration after serving 20 years and reaching the age of 50. This eligibility is subject to applicable law and does not guarantee release.

The Fresno County District Attorney's Office thanks the Fresno Police Department for its investigative work and dedication to this case.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Adam Christopherson of the Fresno County District Attorney's Office Homicide Unit prosecuted this case, with assistance from Senior District Attorney Investigator Jennifer Machado of the Bureau of Investigations.

[F25907731]