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**JUNE DEATH OF 11-YEAR OLD WILL RESULT
IN STATE PRISON COMMITMENT**

With the prosecution announcing ready for the jury trial scheduled to commence this Monday, defendant **Jaime “Flaco” Rodriguez, Jr.**, 19, of Ukiah, changed his plea at a Friday afternoon hearing to no contest for the June 2015 death of his visiting 11-year-old nephew. A no contest plea in this case is the same as a guilty plea for all purposes. As part of a two-case negotiated disposition that included a separate residential burglary, it was agreed that Rodriguez will be sentenced to 84 months in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation when he returns to court on February 26, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. for formal sentencing. The sentencing judge will be the Honorable David Nelson.

Just after midnight on June 18, 2015, deputies from the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office were dispatched to the 100 block of Canyon Drive, in Ukiah, for a reported victim of a gunshot wound. Officers from the Ukiah Police Department also arrived on scene to assist. Upon law enforcement's arrival, the boy was located in the roadway suffering from a gunshot wound to his face/neck area. First aid was administered and emergency medical services were called. Mortally wounded, the boy would eventually pass away when life support efforts were later terminated.

To cover his actions, Rodriguez initially claimed that both he and the boy had been the targets of a drive-by shooting. However, additional investigation revealed that Rodriguez, the victim, and another juvenile had been in a backyard when Rodriguez pulled out a loaded handgun and started to handle it. The 9mm pistol went off, the bullet striking the victim at near point blank range. Rodriguez then carried the victim to the roadway (to set up the false report of a drive-by), while a concerned neighbor was calling 911.

The prosecutor who was to present the evidence to the jury next week was DDA Josh Rosenfeld. The investigating law enforcement agencies were the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office and the Ukiah Police Department. Assisting in the investigation and trial preparation were the California Department of Justice Crime Laboratory in Eureka and investigators working for District Attorney Eyster.