

Beat: News

Albuquerque man pleads guilty in the murder of a U.S. letter carrier

Xavier Zamora

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USPA NEWS - Alexander M.M. Ubaldez, United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, and Melisa Llosa, Inspector in Charge of the Phoenix Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), announced today that Xavier Zamora pleaded guilty to second degree murder of an employee of the United States and using a firearm during a crime of violence resulting in death. Zamora, 20, of Albuquerque will remain in custody pending sentencing, which has not been scheduled.

According to the plea agreement and other court records, on April 22, 2019, Jose Hernandez, a United States Postal Carrier, was delivering mail to a community mailbox outside Zamora's home on Terracotta Place Southwest in Albuquerque. Hernandez observed Zamora strike Zamora's mother during an argument and attempted to intervene. Zamora became angry and retrieved a handgun from his house. Zamora went back outside, confronted Hernandez, and fatally shot Hernandez in the stomach. Zamora fled the scene and disposed of the weapon.

"José Hernandez died protecting a stranger from violence. His selfless courage in the course of his duties embodies the highest ideals of the Postal Service—to bind the nation together," said U.S. Attorney Ubaldez. "We cannot replace the husband, the father, the friend who was taken in this act of violence, but today's plea represents a significant step toward justice. The United States will continue to hold accountable those who plague our communities with senseless gun violence, and to protect the federal employees who serve our nation."

"USPS Letter Carrier Jose Hernandez was a veteran who cared about the community he served, choosing to intervene when he believed his customer was in danger," stated Inspector in Charge Melisa Llosa. "Our thoughts remain with the Hernandez family, friends, and co-workers who continue to process this senseless crime. Investigations of Zamora and others who commit heinous crimes against USPS employees will always be the highest priority of U.S. Postal Inspectors. We are grateful to the U.S. Attorney's Office and our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners for their support during this investigation."

By the terms of the plea agreement, Zamora faces 22 years in prison.

USPIS investigated this case with assistance from the FBI Albuquerque Field Office, Albuquerque Police Department and New Mexico State Police. Assistant United States Attorneys Niki Tapia-Brito and Eva M. Fontanez are prosecuting the case.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Mexico press release June 8, 2022

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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