



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NEWS RELEASE

RE: State of Texas v. Daniel Flores Lopez – D.O.B. 08/24/1973
Cause No.: 11-CR-1623; 138th Judicial District Court

Rio Hondo Man pleads guilty to Capital Murder

Brownsville, Texas – October 20, 2011 – Armando R. Villalobos, County and District Attorney for Cameron County, announces today that Daniel Flores Lopez, 38, of Rio Hondo appeared before a district judge in the 138th courtroom and entered a plea of guilty to the capital murder of Sonia Perez.

He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

“We are pleased with the outcome of the case against the defendant Lopez,” County and District Attorney Armando R. Villalobos said. “I believe the defendant was worried about receiving the death penalty based on the facts of the murder and of our office’s success on cases in which we seek the death penalty.”

“This is a rare crime in our community – a designated “hit” paid for by a conniving husband,” Villalobos said. “We hope maximum sentences like this, keep them a rarity.”

According to police reports, Sonia Perez was found murdered on March 31 just before midnight on Robles Road near Rio Hondo by the Cameron County Sheriff’s Office. She was shot twice.

According to Lopez, he was hired by Perez’s husband, Pentecostal Pastor Julio Cesar Perez, 41, to obtain a weapon and arrange a shooting. Perez had been planning his wife’s murder for three weeks before she was found.

Lopez also indicated that he was to take a photo of the deceased, Sonia Perez, with his cell phone to show proof of his crime. He was arrested on April 4 in Los Fresnos and was charged with the capital murder of Sonia Perez.

The other defendants Gabriel Apolinar Escalante, 20, a member of Perez’s church; Daniel Castaneda, 22, Alfredo Castaneda, 39, and Mark Daniel Garza, 23, including Julio Perez, 41, are awaiting trial on capital murder charges.

They face life in prison without the possibility of parole or death by lethal injection.

For more information, contact the Cameron County and District Attorney's Office at (956) 544-0849.

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