

**News Release from  
The Honorable Sandra Doorley  
Monroe County District Attorney**

February 23, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Luis Rios Morales Sentenced to 48 and 1/3 Years to Life for Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Degree and Various Weapons and Gun Charges**

Rochester, NY- Wednesday, February 23, 2022, Monroe County Judge Dollinger sentenced 38-year-old Luis Rios Morales to 48 and 1/3 years to Life in the New York State Department of Corrections. This comes after a jury conviction of Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, six counts of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, three counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, three counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree, two counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, Conspiracy in the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree and two counts of Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree.

On August 29, 2019, Rochester Police Officers arrived at a house on Bay Street in the City of Rochester for a report of shots fired. Once they arrived, the officers found Jose Ubiles Melendez, who had been shot in the back of the head. Mr. Ubiles Melendez died at the scene. Luis Rios Morales was identified as a suspect for the murder.

Following the death of Jose Ubiles Melendez, a long-term investigation began involving GRANET (Greater Rochester Area Narcotics Enforcement Team) and the Monroe County Heroin Task Force. The investigation ran from November 2019 – April 2020. From this investigation, evidence was collected charging Luis Rios Morales for the murder of Jose Ubiles Melendez, in addition to seventeen counts including Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree, Criminal Possessions of a Controlled Substance in the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, Conspiracy in the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree.

This investigation was led by the Monroe County Heroin Task Force Team, which is made up of partner agencies including Monroe County District Attorney Investigators, and GRANET, which includes the Rochester Police Department, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, and Border Patrol. Other agency collaborators on this long-term investigation included the Rochester Police Department's Major Crimes Unit and Special Investigations, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the United States Post Office and the Monroe County Jail Intelligence Bureau.

During the course of the long-term investigation, law enforcement seized six handguns, six shotguns, and five rifles. In addition to the firearms, law enforcement seized over 200 grams of suspected cocaine, over 10 pounds of suspected fentanyl, 53 grams of suspected heroin and approximately \$10,000 in cash. Nine other defendants were arrested on various weapon and drug charges. These cases have all been resolved.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Robin Catalano, Chief of the Special Investigations Bureau, and Special Assistant District Attorney Megan Hausner, of the Major Felony Bureau.

“Today’s sentence is appropriate given Luis Rios-Morales’ violent and reckless actions,” said Assistant District Attorney Robin Catalano. “Mr. Rios Morales followed Jose Ubiles Melendez and killed him outside of a house, firing eight rounds outdoors where he could have killed an innocent bystander. The excellent collaboration on this long-term investigation secured justice for Jose Ubiles Melendez while removing deadly weapons and large amounts of fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine from our community.”

“Today’s sentence is the final result of a long-term investigation that led to a life sentence for Luis Rios Morales,” said District Attorney Sandra Doorley. “Rios Morales is a ruthless killer and our entire community is safer with him in the New York State Department of Corrections. I am grateful for the months of hard work on this substantial investigation. At the Monroe County District Attorney’s Office, we do our best to seek justice for victims of homicide and rid our streets of deadly narcotics that are poisoning our residents and fueling this behavior. I believe today’s sentence is the result of the efforts put into place by our office and the law enforcement community.”

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