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Wilmington Man Sentenced to More than 20 Years for Downtown Stabbing that Killed Marine

Davy Cleon Spencer Jr., 47, of Wilmington, pleaded guilty pursuant to Alford to Second Degree Murder, Assault with a Deadly Weapon Inflicting Serious Injury, and Assault with a Deadly Weapon with Intent to Kill on October 13, 2026, in New Hanover County Superior Court. Senior Resident Superior Court Judge R. Kent Harrell sentenced Spencer to 251 to 314 months in prison with the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction.

On April 4, 2026, Daniel Montano, Esteban Solis and Roman Thapa, 21-year-old Marines stationed at Camp Lejeune traveled to downtown Wilmington for a night out. As the bars closed, the three men were standing on the sidewalk on Front Street talking with each other when the defendant, who was nearby, became offended. An argument ensued between the defendant and the Marines, which escalated when the defendant took a swing at the men. Daniel Montano punched the defendant in response, at which time the defendant struck Montano with a knife on the left side of his neck. Solis and Thapa joined the altercation and the defendant cut Solis on his left shoulder, causing a deep wound. Thapa continued defending himself against the defendant's assaults until the Wilmington police arrived and broke up the fight. Montano was taken to the hospital and succumbed to his injuries on April 6, 2026.

Wilmington Police Department detectives identified Spencer following an extensive investigation that included reviewing surveillance footage from cameras in the surrounding areas. Although Spencer initially denied being downtown that evening or being involved in a fight, the defendant ultimately admitted that he used a pocketknife during the fight. This knife was recovered by law enforcement in a nearby trashcan. Spencer has a lengthy criminal history dating back to 1995.



Davy Spencer