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## **Venezuelan Man Convicted of the First-Degree Murder after Seven-Day Trial**

On June 16, 2026 a New Hanover County jury convicted Jose Guillermo Yecerra-Ascanio, age 25 of Venezuela, of First Degree Murder, Assault with a Deadly Weapon with the Intent to Kill, Breaking and Entering with the Intent to Terrorize, and Misdemeanor Crime of Domestic Violence. Superior Court Judge Tiffany Powers of Robeson County sentenced Yecerra-Ascanio to life in prison without the possibility of parole in the Department of Adult Correction.

On July 28, 2024, Yecerra-Ascanio struck his 16-year-old ex-girlfriend on her side and was subsequently arrested and charged with one count of Misdemeanor Crime of Domestic Violence. Upon his release from custody on July 29, 2024, Yecerra-Ascanio was ordered not to have any contact with that victim or go about her place of residence, which was 508 Mercer Avenue.

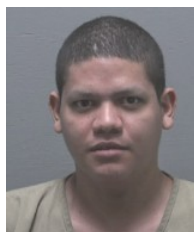
On August 1, 2024 at around 7:30 a.m., the defendant broke into 508 Mercer Avenue and stabbed his ex-girlfriend's roommate, Melvin Gonzales-Veloso, multiple times with a knife, delivering fatal blows to his neck and back. After the murder, the defendant's vehicle was located at around 9:30 a.m. at the Crosswinds Apartments on St. Andrews Drive by then Wilmington Police Department Chief Donny Williams. Shortly thereafter, the defendant was taken into custody at that same location.

Evidence presented at trial came in the form of multiple eyewitness accounts, DNA evidence showing Gonzales-Veloso's blood in the defendant's vehicle, admissions made by the defendant in text messages, and surveillance footage that captured Yecerra-Ascanio's actions before and after the murder.

Assistant District Attorney Brad Matthews said, "We are very happy to be able to get justice for Mr. Gonzales-Veloso's family for this senseless and heinous crime."

"Nobody wins in a case like this. A young man will spend the rest of his life in prison, and another man lost his life to violence," remarked District Attorney Jason Smith. "Domestic violence will not be tolerated in this jurisdiction," Smith continued.

"The prosecution of this case would not have been possible without the swift investigative work of law enforcement and the cooperation of eyewitnesses who immediately came forward with information that led to the defendant's arrest and their testimony at trial," Assistant District Attorney Amy White added.



Jose Guillermo Yecerra-Ascanio