



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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**Aliso Viejo Man Charged with Special Circumstance Murder
for Ambushing Childhood Friend Who Worked as UPS Driver in Irvine**
Defendant is eligible for death penalty if convicted

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 46-year-old UPS employee who was on work disability has been charged with the special circumstance murder for executing his childhood friend and coworker after tracking him down on his delivery route and shooting him 14 times in a matter of seconds as he sat seat belted in his delivery truck in Irvine last week. Authorities are still working to uncover the motive of what led to the execution of a longtime friend.

On May 16, 2024, UPS employee Rhean Jalipa Fontanoza, 46, of Aliso Viejo, is accused of stopping a UPS driver around 12:30 p.m. and asking if the route belonged to his childhood friend, 50-year-old UPS delivery driver Expedito De Leon. When the driver told him De Leon had another route, Fontanoza is accused of going to the UPS Aliso Viejo substation where he was seen accessing a computer that shows driver routes and taking a picture with his phone. Fontanoza had been on disability leave but was scheduled to return to work on June 1, 2024.

Just before 3 p.m., Fontanoza is accused of tracking De Leon down on his route and driving past him a new vehicle which De Leon wouldn't recognize. De Leon then left his truck to make a delivery and returned to his truck, and buckled his seatbelt. He still had his UPS scanner in his

hand and his seatbelt buckled when Fontanoza drove next to De Leon's delivery truck and shot him 14 times in 19 seconds.

Fontanoza is currently being held on no bail. He is eligible for the death penalty if convicted.

Fontanoza drove away after the shooting and was later found by police in his vehicle on Santiago Canyon Road in Orange later that afternoon. Fontanoza refused to exit his vehicle but was arrested after police deployed a police K9 and tear gas into the vehicle.

"Mr. De Leon was just going about his day, doing his job with no idea his longtime friend was stalking him with every intent to kill him," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "The depravity involved to plot and carry out a plan to execute someone you shared a lifetime of memories is not something anyone of us can wrap our heads around. No life should have to end like this and it is a tragedy that should have never happened."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Lexie Elliott of the Homicide Unit is prosecuting this case.

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