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Department of Justice

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Aurea Vázquez-Rijos Found Guilty Of The Murder Of Her Husband Adam Joel Anhang Uster

Marcia Vázquez-Rijos and José Ferrer-Sosa were also found guilty

SAN JUAN, P.R. – Today, after a 24-day jury trial, a jury found Aurea Vázquez-Rijos, a.k.a. “Beatriz Vázquez/Aurea Dominicci,” her sister Marcia Vázquez-Rijos and Marcia Vázquez-Rijos’s ex-boyfriend José Ferrer-Sosa, guilty of the murder of Adam Joel Anhang Uster, announced United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, Rosa Emilia Rodríguez Vélez. Adam Anhang was murdered on September 22, 2005.

The trial is a result of an investigation that caused the release from state prison of a man who was wrongly convicted of the murder of Adam Anhang. On or about October 2007, Jonathan Román-Rivera was convicted of the murder of Adam Anhang and sentenced to 105 years in prison. In June 2008, the federal investigation into the murder of Adam Anhang resulted in Román-Rivera’s release, and the arrest of Alex Pabón-Colón. On June 4, 2008, a Federal Grand Jury in the District of Puerto Rico returned a two-count indictment charging Aurea Vázquez-Rijos and Alex Pabón-Colón, a.k.a. “Alex el loco/Dante” for the murder of Adam Anhang. Pabón-Colón pleaded guilty on June 13, 2008. Aurea Vázquez-Rijos moved to Italy in 2008, in an effort to avoid prosecution. She was arrested in Spain in 2013 and extradited after contested proceedings in 2015. On August 15, 2013, a Federal Grand Jury returned a second superseding indictment charging José Ferrer-Sosa and Marcia Vázquez-Rijos, along with Aurea Vázquez-Rijos with the murder-for-hire of Adam Anhang. Charbel Vázquez-Rijos, Aurea and Marcia’s brother, is facing a charge for perjury before the Grand Jury and is pending trial.

More than 20 witnesses testified in the Government’s case. During trial, the government proved that Aurea Vázquez-Rijos, José Ferrer-Sosa and Marcia Vázquez-Rijos met with Alex Pabón-Colón on September 21, 2005, to propose that Pabón-Colón murder Adam Anhang in exchange for the amount of three million dollars. Aurea Vázquez-Rijos made approximately ten telephone calls to Adam Anhang in order to induce him to have dinner with her at a restaurant in Old San Juan, and to facilitate his murder by defendant Pabón-Colón. On September 22, 2005, Alex Pabón-Colón received a call from José Ferrer-Sosa, who informed him that defendant Aurea Vázquez-Rijos and her husband were dining at a restaurant in Old San Juan and that Adam Anhang had to be murdered that evening.

After dinner, Pabón-Colón murdered Adam Anhang at the corner of San Justo and Luna streets in Old San Juan as Adam Anhang and defendant Aurea Vázquez-Rijos were returning to the parking garage to pick up

Adam Anhang's car. The murder was carried out, as previously discussed, and pursuant to the instructions Pabón-Colón had received from defendants Aurea Vázquez-Rijos, Jose Ferrer-Sosa, and Marcia Vázquez-Rijos. Pabón-Colón stabbed Adam Anhang on multiple occasions and forcefully hit him in the head area with a cobblestone, while his wife observed the fatal attack. Adam Anhang fought Pabón-Colón and tried to protect his wife from the assailant. Adam Anhang never knew his wife was the one who ordered the murder.

At trial, witnesses testified that Aurea Vázquez-Rijos watched as her husband got murdered; his last words were directed to her: "Run baby, run!" At the same time, she reminded Pabón-Colón that he needed to inflict an injury on her, in order to create the impression that she was blameless in the incident, and in order to perpetuate the idea that Adam Anhang's death resulted from a robbery.

Evidence showed that Pabón-Colón wrote letters attempting to collect money from the defendants for the murder of Adam Anhang. Defendant Marcia Vázquez-Rijos received the third letter Pabón-Colón sent to them and she advised the person who delivered the letter to tell Pabón-Colón that they did not have the money to pay him. The jury found the defendants guilty of all counts including conspiracy and the use an interstate facility in murder-for-hire.

"Today's verdict is the culmination of 13 years of tireless work by investigators, agents, and prosecutors. Their dedication has brought long-awaited justice to Adam Anhang's family and friends," said United States Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez. "I am immensely proud of our prosecution team and our law-enforcement partners for this successful prosecution; with the convictions of these defendants, the victim's family will hopefully find some closure from this senseless crime."

Murder for hire is a crime punishable by death or imprisonment for any term of years or for life.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the Puerto Rico Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys José Ruiz-Santiago and Jenifer Y. Hernández-Vega.

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