



December 6, 2024

Juan Perez Pleads Guilty to Aggravated Murder and Sentenced to Life in Prison With the First Eligibility of Parole after 66 Years for Killing Two Outside of Rookies Sports Bar and Grill in Parma

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that Juan Perez, 31, pleaded guilty to two counts of aggravated murder for killing 27-year-old off-duty Cuyahoga County Correctional Officer and security guard Timoteo Cruz and 29-year-old Sean Acierno outside Rookies Sports Bar and Grill in Parma. He was sentenced to life in prison with the first eligibility of parole after 66 years.

"What was supposed to be a fun night out at a local sports bar turned to tragedy due to senseless gun violence," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "He will have at least 66 years to think about the consequences of his actions."

On March 13, 2021, Juan Perez and his brother Luis Candelario, 34, drove to Rookies Sports Bar and Grill on Pearl Road in Parma. They went inside the bar and stayed for a couple of hours. Around 2:10 a.m., they became belligerent and were asked to leave by Timoteo Cruz, who was working as a security guard for the bar.

Perez and Candelario then walked to their vehicle that was parked outside of the bar and Perez grabbed an AR-15 firearm. Perez began shooting in the parking lot – striking a bystander, Sean Acierno, multiple times. One of the stray bullets then struck a 23-year-old female. Timoteo Cruz heard the gunshots and shot Perez in the leg with his firearm. Perez then shot Cruz multiple times. Perez and Candelario both returned to their vehicle and fled the scene. This was captured on surveillance video.

The Parma Police Department and the Parma Fire Department responded to the scene. Sean Acierno was pronounced deceased on the scene. Timoteo Cruz was transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased. Later that day, Perez and Candelario were arrested.

On December 6, 2024, Juan Perez pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- **Two counts of Aggravated Murder**

He was sentenced to life in prison with the first eligibility of parole after 66 years.

On August 29, 2022, Luis Candelario pleaded guilty to the following charge:

- **One count of Involuntary Manslaughter**

On October 11, 2022, he was sentenced to 11 years in prison.