

Commonwealth of Virginia

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COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY STEVE DESCANO ANNOUNCES BAZEN BERHE SENTENCED TO 100 YEARS FOR 2021 MURDER

Fairfax County, VA — Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano announced today that Bazen Berhe, 25, was sentenced to 100 years for the 2021 murder of Hernan Leiva, 58, in the parking lot of the Bailey's Crossroads Target where they both worked.

At the sentencing hearing, the defendant threatened to kill or hurt other people if he was not given the harshest possible sentence. The judge sentenced him to 100 years, with 30 years suspended, for the first-degree murder charge, so the defendant will serve 70 years active incarceration.

Berhe, of Alexandria, claimed he was upset with Leiva, who was a janitor at the Target, for taking Berhe's lunch from the office fridge. After this incident occurred on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, Berhe began to plan the murder over the following few days. The next day, April 15, Berhe purchased a hammer and two knives while leaving his shift at Target, and he told detectives that he spent the following day, April 16, "training for the murder." In the early hours of Saturday, April 17, Berhe arrived at the employee parking lot and laid in wait for Leiva. When Leiva arrived for work, Berhe stabbed and bludgeoned him to death before fleeing. Berhe confessed to the crime immediately and pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in October 2023.

"Mr. Leiva's unnecessary and tragic death leaves behind a grieving family and community, one that will never be the same after such a senseless act of violence," CA Descano said. "In this case, because of the unique and self-proclaimed danger the defendant continues to pose to the community, today's sentence was a necessary outcome for maintaining public safety."

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