



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr.  
District of Columbia

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**IDAHO MAN SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON  
FOR NOVEMBER 2011 SHOOTING AT THE WHITE HOUSE**

*Defendant Fired at Least Eight Shots in Attack*

WASHINGTON - Oscar Ramiro Ortega-Hernandez, 23, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, who used a semi-automatic assault rifle to fire at least eight rounds at the White House in November 2011, was sentenced today to 25 years in prison for terrorism and weapons offenses.

The sentencing was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., Valerie Parlave, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and Kathy A. Michalko, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Field Office of the U.S. Secret Service.

Ortega-Hernandez pleaded guilty Sept. 18, 2013, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to one count of injury to a dwelling and placing lives in jeopardy within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, as well as one count of discharging a firearm during a crime of violence. Additionally, he admitted that the attack was a terrorist act, and therefore, a sentencing enhancement under the United States Sentencing Guidelines is applicable.

The Honorable Rosemary M. Collyer of the District of Columbia sentenced Ortega-Hernandez this afternoon. In addition to the prison term, she ordered that he pay approximately \$94,000 in restitution for damage caused to the White House. Upon completion of his prison term, Ortega-Hernandez will be placed on five years of supervised release.

"This man drove cross-country to launch an assault rifle attack on the White House from Constitution Avenue," said U.S. Attorney Machen. "He was motivated by hatred for the President and the desire to start a revolution against the federal government. We are very fortunate that his bullets narrowly missed the U.S. Secret Service officers guarding the White House that night. This 25-year prison sentence demonstrates that anyone who comes to the nation's capital planning to use violence should expect to spend decades behind bars."

"Acts of terrorism, like the one that Mr. Ortega-Hernandez was sentenced for today, instill a sense of fear in our community," said Assistant Director in Charge Parlave. "Along with

our law enforcement partners, the FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force and Evidence Response Team diligently worked to collect evidence of Ortega-Hernandez's actions on the night of Nov. 11, 2011, ultimately leading to the justice he received today for committing this crime of violence."

"Today's sentencing is the result of the efforts of the U.S Secret Service and many of our law enforcement partners to provide the highest level of protection to our Nation's leaders," said Special Agent in Charge Michalko.

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According to the government's evidence, the events unfolded like this:

Beginning in 2010, Ortega-Hernandez made repeated statements to many friends and associates in Idaho about his contempt for the federal government, and he espoused numerous theories regarding how the federal government was seeking to control Americans through Global Positioning System chips, fluoride, and aspartame. He also criticized the federal government for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, claiming that the United States was "bullying" other countries to obtain oil. He made numerous statements vilifying the President of the United States, calling him "the devil" and "the anti-Christ," among other things. On numerous occasions, he told friends and associates that "he was on a mission from God to take out Obama."

On March 19, 2011, Ortega-Hernandez purchased a Romanian Cugir SA semi-automatic (AK-47-style) assault rifle from an individual in Idaho for \$550. He also purchased more than 1,200 rounds of ammunition to use with the weapon. In August 2011, Ortega-Hernandez purchased a scope kit on the Internet and asked a friend to install it on the weapon for him. Over the course of six months, Ortega-Hernandez repeatedly practiced firing the weapon at a desolate crater located on land owned by the Bureau of Land Management outside of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

On Oct. 23, 2011, Ortega-Hernandez made two short videos at the home of one of his friends. In the videos, he praised Osama bin Laden for having the courage to stand up to the United States, and called for a revolution against the federal government. Ortega-Hernandez described himself as a "cold-hearted warrior of God" and declared, "it's time for Armageddon."

After making the two videos, Ortega-Hernandez departed Idaho Falls and drove more than 2,000 miles, armed with his Romanian Cugir SA semi-automatic assault rifle with the attached scope, and more than 180 rounds of ammunition.

On Nov. 11, 2011, at approximately 8:50 p.m., Ortega-Hernandez drove southbound on 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW and made a right turn onto Constitution Avenue NW. Shortly after passing the entrance to the Ellipse, he stopped his vehicle in the middle of the road. With the passenger-side window of his car lowered, he pointed his assault rifle out the passenger-side window of the car and aimed directly at the White House. He fired at least eight rounds at the White House.

Following the shooting, Ortega-Hernandez fled the scene, driving erratically and at a high rate of speed westbound on Constitution Avenue. Moments later, he lost control of the vehicle

and crashed near the ramp from Constitution Avenue to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge in front of the United States Institute of Peace. After efforts to restart the vehicle failed, Ortega-Hernandez fled from the vehicle on foot. Law enforcement subsequently launched a multi-jurisdictional search for Ortega-Hernandez. He was arrested on Nov. 16, 2011, in Indiana, Pa.

The FBI examined the area around the White House and located approximately eight bullet impact points on the south side of the building on or above the second story. Two bullets were recovered from the White House: one from a window frame on the Truman Balcony and one found on the ground east of the South entrance. The FBI determined that both of those bullets were fired from Ortega-Hernandez's assault rifle. The FBI also recovered a bullet jacket that was found in the window sill of the Truman Balcony, which was also fired from Ortega-Hernandez's assault rifle.

At the time of the shooting, two U.S. Secret Service officers were stationed on the northeast section of the roof of the White House. One of the bullets fired by Ortega-Hernandez struck the roof of the White House within approximately 20 feet of where the officers were stationed. In addition, another U.S. Secret Service Officer was stationed at the South Portico underneath the Truman balcony at the time of the shooting. Several of the bullets fired by Ortega-Hernandez struck the Truman balcony directly above where this officer was stationed. This officer took cover behind the stairwell, drew a firearm, and readied a shotgun.

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In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen, Assistant Director in Charge Parlave and Special Agent in Charge Michalko expressed their appreciation to those who diligently investigated this case from the FBI's Washington Field Office, the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Park Police. They also acknowledged the assistance provided by the Pennsylvania State Police; the Arlington County, Va. Police Department; the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Pennsylvania; the FBI Laboratory at Quantico, Va.; FBI field offices in Pittsburgh and Salt Lake City, including the Idaho Falls Resident Agency, and Secret Service field offices in Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, and Boise, Idaho. Additionally they thanked those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, including former Assistant U.S. Attorney John Borchert, who assisted in securing the defendant's indictment; Paralegal Specialists Jenifer Rowe and Devron Elliott, Victim/Witness Coordinator Dawn Tolson-Hightower, and Litigation Technology Specialist Leif Hickling.

Finally, they commended the efforts of Special Assistant U.S. Attorney George P. Varghese and Assistant U.S. Attorney Alessio D. Evangelista of the National Security Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, who prosecuted the case.

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