

# State of South Carolina

Charleston County  
101 Meeting Street, Suite 400  
Charleston, SC 29401  
Phone (843) 958-1900  
Fax (843) 958-1905



Berkeley County  
300-B California Avenue  
Moncks Corner, SC 29461  
Phone (843) 723-3800 ext. 4529  
Fax (843) 719-4588

**SCARLETT A. WILSON**

*Solicitor, Ninth Judicial Circuit*

## **Man Who Shot Wife to Death in Nexton Pleads Guilty During Jury Trial**

**Moncks Corner, S.C.--** Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that Salin Mojica-Hernandez, pled guilty to Murder two days into trial after the Court arranged and provided interpreters for the trial and after the State introduced over 70 pieces of evidence. Mojica-Hernandez shot his wife, Maria De La Cruz Chavarria, to death on July 20, 2021. Deputy Solicitor Anne Williams prosecuted the case along with Assistant Solicitor Kawohi Morris. Solicitor Wilson stated, "We are grateful that Judge Young acknowledged the heinous nature of this crime and responded with a 42-year sentence. Domestic violence is a plague that often spreads beyond the four walls of a victim's home."

The investigation showed that law enforcement had been called to the residence of the Victim and Defendant three times in the previous year for domestic violence episodes. Each time the Victim declined to go forward and no arrest was made. The Victim's murder followed a series of escalations in the relationship and the Victim had been looking for a divorce attorney to help her remove the Defendant from the home they shared with their two young children.

On the day of the murder, the Victim left her home before 5:00 a.m., to start her 6:00 a.m. shift at Sportsman Boats. As she drove her usual route, she pulled over on Brighton Park Blvd where she was shot in her car. She then tried to run away but only made it to a grassy median just a few feet away where she was shot five more times; at least once after collapsing. In all, the Victim sustained six gunshot wounds. During opening statements, Assistant Solicitor, Morris told the jury that the Maria De la Cruz Chavarria died alone in the dark just a few feet away from her children's car seats and strollers.

The State introduced multiple pieces of evidence at trial including shell casings, bullets, gunshot residue kits, pictures of the crime scene and the testimony from the 911 caller. The Defendant told detectives with the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office that he remained home the morning his wife was murdered; but the State was poised to present the surveillance footage from the Defendant's home showing him pursuing the Victim in his truck as she left for work. He left wearing shorts and a shirt and returned 15 minutes later wearing only boxer shorts and carrying a square box. Expert testimony regarding the Defendant's cell phone and surveillance footage from local businesses would have also shown the jury the Defendant in close pursuit of the Victim to the crime scene. Testimony from associates of the Defendant would have shown that he was inquiring about purchasing 9 mm ammunition just weeks before the murder. He used the same caliber ammunition to shoot the Victim.

The Defendant faced a maximum penalty of life in prison— and 5 years on the accompanying weapons charge. Judge Roger M. Young imposed a 42-year sentence to run concurrently with the five years for Possession of a Weapon During the Commission of a Violent Crime. Family members addressed the Court during the plea and spoke of the humiliation and abuse suffered by the Victim before her death. They spoke about the Victim’s two young sons and their trauma. Deputy Solicitor Anne Williams stated, “We wish the Victim’s family had not had to go through the painful process of trial but hope that they can get some relief now that the Defendant has been convicted.”

###