



Yuma County Sheriff's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

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DR# 2022-79396

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 13, 2023 - 4:00 PM

UPDATE

Homicide Arrest

Location of Incident: Desert Area in the Mohawk Mountain Range – Yuma, AZ

UPDATE: The suspect in this case, Efrain Leyva-Alvarez, 35, entered a plea agreement for charges on Manslaughter on August 31, 2023 to serve a 10.5 year prison term for his involvement.

ORIGINAL RELEASE – January 16, 2023 – 9:45 AM

On Wednesday, September 7, 2022, at approximately 8:17 PM, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) responded to a report of a deceased male involving possible foul play in the desert area of the Mohawk Mountain Range.

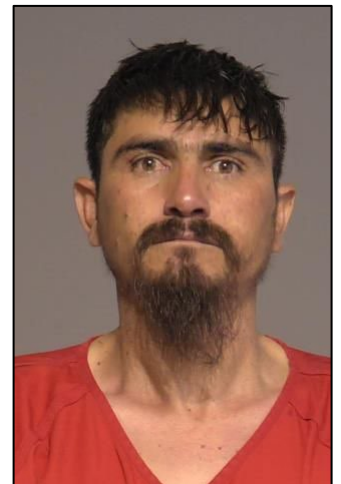
The initial investigation revealed a subject called 911 for assistance after not being able to continue walking through the desert. The subject was part of a group of subjects who had entered the United States illegally from Mexico. The subject was apprehended by United States Border Patrol and advised Agents that the guide of the border crossing group was believed to have caused serious injury to a member of the group.

The reporting party informed Agents of the guide and victim going to a water tank near their location, and when the guide returned alone, he advised the group the victim fell off a cliff and would not return due to the victim being injured and fatigued.

Border Patrol Agents searched the area and located a deceased male as described by the reporting party. The guide was not able to be located at the time and was believed to have fled back to Mexico.

YCSO's Search and Rescue Team responded and recovered the deceased.

The Criminal Investigations Bureau assumed the investigation.



Efrain Leyva-Alvarez

After further interviews and investigation, on January 16th, 2023, the guide, identified as **Efrain Leyva-Alvarez**, 34, was arrested and booked into the Yuma County Detention Center for 2nd Degree Murder, after having been detained by Border Patrol for entering the United States illegally.

The identification of the deceased will not be released at this time pending next of kin notification.

Anyone with information regarding this case, please contact the Yuma County Sheriff's Office at 928-783-4427 or 78-CRIME to remain anonymous. You can also visit our website at www.yumacountysheriff.org to submit an anonymous tip.

Information Released By: Tania Pavlak, Public Affairs Specialist