South Florida UPS driver, motorist killed in reckless police shootout in rush hour traffic

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A Miami, Florida area UPS driver was killed in a shootout Thursday between police and two carjackers who had taken the driver hostage and commandeered his vehicle after fleeing a jewelry store robbery in the wealthy suburb of Coral Gables. Another innocent bystander was also killed, along with the carjackers.

The UPS worker, Frank Ordonez, a 27-year-old father of two, was working as driver alone for the first time, covering the route for a co-worker who had called-in sick.

The incident started around 4 p.m. on Thursday when the two unidentified men attempted to rob a jewelry store located in the upscale shopping district known as Miracle Mile. This resulted in a shootout with the store owner and the men fleeing the scene. A woman in the store at the time was reportedly injured.

As the shootout spilled out onto the street, bullets struck nearby buildings, including city hall. The two robbers reportedly abandoned their getaway vehicle and then hijacked the UPS truck driven by Ordonez, who was in the area making a delivery.

The robbers then led police on a high-speed chase across Dade and Broward counties, ending miles away in Miramar when the UPS truck got stuck on Miramar Parkway, a section of I-75, during rush hour traffic.

At least nineteen police officers then surrounded the vehicle on three sides and began exchanging fire with the two criminals. In video of the incident police officers can be seen taking cover behind vehicles with drivers and passengers still inside, unable to escape the deadly gridlock.

Police officers from five different agencies participated in the shootout, firing at least 200 rounds. As footage of the incident spread social media users denounced the police for recklessly opening fire while Ordonez was still being held hostage and endangering

innocent bystanders caught in the hail of bullets.

One video posted on social media showed police firing dozens of shots at one of the robbers through the passenger side door as Ordonez, on his knees, tried to crawl to safety. It was at this time that he was likely killed by police gunfire.

Another innocent person was also killed in the shootout and at least one other injured. The slain motorist was identified by police as Richard Cutshaw, a 70-year-old resident of Pembroke Pines. Cutshaw, who worked as a union organizer, was returning home from work when he was caught in the crossfire.

Ordonez's step-sister Genevieve Merino posted on Twitter "Today I lost my brother, because of the fucking negligence and stupidity of the police. Instead of negotiating with a hostage situation they just shot everyone. (Including my brother) please retweet this so everyone can be aware how stupid these cops are."

Joe Merino, Ordonez's stepfather, spoke to local media about his stepson and the circumstances leading to his death:

"Frank was 27 years old, he has a three and five-year-old daughter, dads not coming back... Frank can't speak for himself, I will. I want to let everyone know this is police negligence. I'm gonna use a strong word because it's been on my mind all night. Murder. They murdered him... It could have been prevented…

"Look at the videos…Frank is laying down behind the suspect, the suspect is shooting at the police and the bullets, if you look at the thirty, forty bullets riddled throughout the truck you can tell it was incoming, the suspect was pointing to the police and the police were shooting back. The video doesn't lie...it was a wild west shooting, they had no regard for rush hour…that's why I use words like recklessness, irresponsibility, disregard for human life, they went home that night to

their families, Frank never came back."

On Genevieve Merino's Twitter account fellow UPS drivers and others posted messages supporting the family and condemning the police. AlfonsoD27 wrote "I'm really sorry for you and your family's loss. I'm a UPS driver in CA. What happen to your brother really hit home. I know there's nothing anyone can say to make this any better but just know there's a bunch of drivers in Cali praying for you guys. Its so unfair."

Another post read, "I have no words to express how tragic unnecessary and barbaric this was. My condolences to your family & friends. No one should have to witness a loved one encounter such violence perpetrated by those sworn to protect & serve."

A GoFundMe fundraiser set up by Raymond Mathers, a UPS driver in New York, raised more than $42,000 in less than 24 hours from more than 1,300 donors to help Ordonez's family cover the cost of his funeral and burial.

Ordonez had worked for five years at UPS loading trucks at the warehouse before recently being promoted to a cover driver, a position where he took up routes for co-workers who were sick or absent. He was due to receive his own route in January.

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