



Written by on October 14, 2010

Mexican Investigator in Border Lake Killing Murdered

Rolando Flores, the commander of the investigation into the shooting of American Jet Skier David Michael Hartley, which occurred on September 30, has himself been murdered, U.S. and Mexican officials announced on October 12.

A [CBS News report](#) quoted Ruben Rios, identified as a spokesman for the Mexican Tamaulipas state prosecutor's office, who said that Flores, the commander of state investigators in Ciudad Miguel Aleman and part of a group investigating the presumed Hartley murder, had been killed. The San Antonio *Express-News* reported that Flores' head was delivered to the Mexican military in a suitcase.



CBS also cited a statement made by Dennis Hartley, David Hartley's father, to the Associated Press from his Colorado home, who was obviously further distressed by this latest development:

I just, I'm in shock about this right now. I really don't have any hope that David will be found. I really hate other people putting their lives at stake. We don't need more sons lost. If this is true, I'm just really heart broken that this happened.

In a report published [here](#) on October 8, we noted that Hartley's wife, Tiffany, told reporters that on September 30, she and her husband had ridden Jet Skis across Falcon Lake, a dammed portion of the Rio Grande that straddles the U.S.-Mexican border, to visit an old church. After they visited the church and started back across the lake, armed men in three small boats raced toward them from shore. The couple tried to speed away, but the gunmen opened fire and Mr. Hartley was shot in the head.

Mrs. Hartley tried to haul her unconscious husband onto her own Jet Ski but was not strong enough. "I tried pulling him up, and you cannot imagine how awful it was not being able to help him," she told ABC News.

A report in the San Antonio *Express-News* cited a statement issued by Fred Burton, the vice president of intelligence of [STRATFOR](#), an Austin, Texas-based global intelligence company, stating its finding that Hartley had been murdered by members of the Zeta drug cartel who mistakenly believed he was acting as a spy for the enemy Gulf cartel.

STRATFOR stated that its investigation found that Hartley's remains had been destroyed because the hit was unauthorized, presenting this as an explanation for why his body had not been found.

"The cartel boss — Miguel Trevino — is highly upset over the fact that these individuals shot and killed Mr Hartley and it's our understanding that the cartel boss is hunting for the killers of Mr. Hartley so he can take care of them himself," said Burton.

Another report in the [Houston Chronicle](#) quoted Mrs. Hartley's mother, Cynthia Young, who said the family had seen the STRATFOR report but had no comment yet on its findings. "It hasn't been



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confirmed through the investigative officers here,” she said. “But we’re still standing and believing for a miracle that we will get David back in some fashion and that’s the way God wants it. But he’s in charge.”

The Australian [Herald Sun](#) quoted Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s assertion that the United States is doing “everything we know to do” to help find Hartley’s body, noting:

“We are ... supporting local law enforcement, supporting the authorities on the border,” Clinton said during an interview with ABC News that aired [on October 14].

Clinton added that the US was “doing everything that we know to do to try to assist in helping to find the body and helping to find the perpetrators.”

The *Herald Sun* also reported that on October 10, Mexican police named Juan Pedro Saldivar-Farias and Jose Manuel Saldivar-Farias, brothers who are known associates of the Zetas drug cartel, as suspects in the shooting.

In an interview with [CNN](#), Zapata County, Texas, Sheriff Sigifredo Gonzalez, Jr. vowed to pursue the search for Hartley’s remains and killers: “We continue the search on this side of the border. We’re also sending a message that we’re here.”

South of the Rio Grande, Ruben Dario-Rios, a spokesman for the Attorney General of Tamaulipas state, stated the obvious: “Our investigators are out there right now. A body has still not been found.”

CNN also quoted Mrs. Hartley’ comments to HLN’s “Issues with Jane Velez-Mitchell,” in which she expressed sympathy for Rolando Flores’s family. Hartley had spoken with the Mexican official not long before his murder and said: “He was so sincere and so considerate for us, it just breaks my heart that somebody would do that to him.”

“We just want David back,” Mrs. Hartley said. “Maybe they can’t provide a body, I don’t know. But they can provide something of evidence, anything that would tell us where David’s at. We just want him back. Give us that, and we’ll go away.”

Beyond the personal tragedy experienced by David Hartley’s wife and other family is the overall issue of rampant, out-of-control crime along the U.S.-Mexican border.

Americans alarmed by the rising tide of illegal immigrants crossing our southern border have long called upon our federal government to secure our borders. The apparent murder of David Hartley adds another reason for accomplishing this difficult, but achievable task. Though Hartley was attacked on the Mexican side of the border, the magnitude of the crime spree — in reality a full-scale war — waged by drug cartels within sight of the United States threatens the safety of every American who lives along the border. It is little wonder that the state of Arizona finally decided to take action, where our federal authorities have been remiss.

Photo: Texas game warden Jake Mort travels with an M-16 on a Parks and Wildlife boat, and a U.S. Coast Guard boat is seen in the background, on Falcon Lake, a lake that straddles the U.S. Mexico border, where where Coloradan David Hartley is still missing, Oct. 7, 2010 in Zapata, Texas:

AP Images



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