



Attorney General Doug Peterson

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Today, in Richardson County District Court, a jury found Desiderio Hernandez, age 32, guilty of First Degree Murder of his relative, Joseph A. Debella, Jr. and Use of a Firearm to Commit a Felony and Possession of a Firearm by a Prohibited Person.

On August 5, 2015, Falls City Police Department received a 911 emergency call reporting that a person had been shot. A male, identified as Debella was found shot in the head in the basement. He was taken to the Falls City Hospital and later transported to Bryan LGH Hospital in Lincoln via medical helicopter and died on August 13th.

According to witnesses, a loud noise was heard in the basement and Hernandez was observed walking up the stairs and out of the house. Hernandez confessed to both his sister and brother that he had shot Debella. Hernandez's sister and sister-in-law drove to the location of the shooting to check on the victim where they went to the basement and found Debella with a gunshot wound to his head. Hernandez was later apprehended following a prolonged police standoff in Horton, Kansas.

Sentencing is set for January 31, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Assistant Attorneys General Corey O'Brien and Jason Bergevin prosecuted the case. The case was investigated by the Nebraska State Patrol, Falls City Police Department, the Horton, Kansas Police Department, and Investigator Bill Black of the Attorney General's Office. Victim Advocate Ellen Reilly also assisted in the matter.

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