

Name: Bethany B.

Title: “Venezuelan officials identify 7 suspects in slaying of beauty queen”

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Author: Mery Mogollon and Chris Kraul

Link: <http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-venezuela-actress-beauty-suspects-20140109,0,173509.story#axzz2rXHSCJVj>

Mourning a Beauty while Hunting the Beasts

Although the title is reminiscent of a familiar Disney tale, this real life story of a beautiful woman ends tragically, when her life was taken far too soon. Miss Venezuela 2004 is the beauty at the center of this heart-wrenching event, along with her ex-husband and their five-year old daughter.

On January 6, 2014, Monica Spears, 29, her ex husband, Thomas Henry Berry, 39, and their five-year old daughter were driving through Venezuela when their car became disabled due to a flat tire. They tried to maintain their safety by locking their vehicle’s doors; however, that was not enough to hold back the threat that was coming from the other side. Monica and Thomas were fatally shot through the car windows, while their young child survived despite taking a bullet to the leg.

This crime has left the police and investigators to pick up the pieces and attempt to find and charge the guilty party. Police Commissioner, Jose Gregoria Sierralta, believes that the criminals’ motive was robbery. A few members from a Puerto Cabello gang, El Cambur Savages are the prime suspects in this case and are believed to have put tire spikes in the road to cause the victims’ flat tire. When the police searched the suspects’ residences, they found the victims’ items, including a digital camera that belonged to Monica Spears.

Although the outcome of this attack was gruesome and heartbreaking, it is not uncommon in this region. According to Mery Mogollon and Chris Kraul, “Venezuela has one of the highest homicide rates in the hemisphere.” Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro already has plans to reduce the amount of firearms in the country. The President is upset because he believes the media is using this tragedy to “demoralize” and “destroy” Venezuela. He plans to make changes on the staff of his Cabinet, in hopes of improvement.

A terrible tragedy struck Venezuela once again; however, this time it was different. Despite Venezuela ranking with the “highest homicide rate in the hemisphere”, these specific homicides shocked the country. The victims included a nationwide celebrity and her family, whom many people loved and admired. This was an example of a random, robbery attack that shook the country because it involved a household name. President Maduro has been set into action to bring changes regarding firearm safety alongside his newly appointed Cabinet. He also longs to set the media straight on the true Venezuela and not let people get caught up in this one attack. His actions seem to agree with his words in that he wants change in the positive direction for Venezuela.

When I first read this article, I viewed the situation as if I was one of the victims and I was terrified. I can’t imagine driving down the road with my family, unsuspecting, and right into a trap ending in my death. I agree with the President; Venezuela needs to do something soon about their high homicide rates. I think it’s positive that President Maduro is taking action by getting new people into the Cabinet to make changes regarding policies on firearms. I hope that Venezuela, as a nation, can reduce their homicide rates and create a safer country for people to live in,

while also improving their image among the other nations of the world.