

U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE:

**Esteban Santiago Has Initial Appearance in Federal Court in Connection with Shooting
at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport**

Esteban Santiago Ruiz (Santiago) had his initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Alicia O. Valle this morning in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Santiago is being temporarily detained without bond. A detention hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at 1:00 p.m., before United States Magistrate Judge Lurana S. Snow in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, George L. Piro, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Miami Field Office, and Scott Israel, Sheriff, Broward County Sheriff's Office (BSO) made the announcement.

Santiago is charged in a federal criminal complaint with violations of: Title 18, United States Code, Section 37(a)(1), performing an act of violence against a person at an airport serving international civil aviation that caused serious bodily injury; Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c)(1)(A), using and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence; and Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(j), causing the death of a person through the use of a firearm in the course of a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c). The statutory charges authorize a maximum penalty, upon conviction, of death or imprisonment for life or any term of years.

According to the criminal complaint, on January 6, 2017, at approximately 12:56 p.m., Santiago was present in the Terminal 2 baggage claim area of the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when he pulled out a handgun. The area was crowded with newly-arrived passengers retrieving their luggage. Santiago started shooting, aiming at his victims' heads until he was out of ammunition. Santiago killed five people and wounded six more. Moments later, Santiago was confronted by a BSO deputy. He dropped his handgun on the ground and was arrested by BSO deputies.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ricardo A. Del Toro with assistance from Department of Justice Trial Attorney Larry Schneider.

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.