

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Streets of Laredo

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Tonight on Dateline.
A ruthless murderer on the prowl.
Until one brave woman slips his grasp.
She does something amazing.
She's able to slip out of her blouse.
So he was trying to grab you?
He was trying to grab me.
You're your...
He freaks it.
She realizes, oh my God, he killed Melissa.
He killed Claudine.
And I'm sitting in his house.
I'm Lester Holt and this is Dateline.
Here's Josh Mankowicz with The Streets of Laredo.
These are the streets of Laredo, Texas.
And these are also the streets of Laredo.
They're named after famous mystery writers.
Men and women who created frightening, intriguing stories full of twists.
Stories that often deal with the wealthy, the powerful, the privileged,
and the damage they can do.
We cover a lot of that on Dateline, too.
This story is different.
It's a visit to the underbelly.
A four-block stretch of Laredo called San Bernardo Avenue.
It is the wrong side of the tracks.
Known for prostitution, drug deals, and everything that comes with that.
In the late summer of 2018, these blocks were even more dangerous.
That's when someone was hunting the women of San Bernardo, like prey.
On these sidewalks, you find people who rarely have their stories told.
It began on September 3rd, when a woman's body was found on a secluded road
25 miles from downtown.
Now, despite its frontier reputation, the border town of Laredo
is consistently ranked among the safest cities in the country.
Isidro Alinez is Webb County District Attorney.
Usually when a body turns up, it's not a murder,
it's somebody who was crossing the border who died from the heat.
That's exactly true.
This wasn't that.

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No, not at all. Not at all.

Webb County Sheriff's Captain Federico Calderon was called to the scene.

A young woman, shot in the head.

From a distance, it looked like she might have been dumped there, but, you know, upon closer inspection, it looked like she had been executed at that spot.

There were shell casings.

The ammo came from a 40-caliber handgun and the brand Federal, a leading ammunition supplier that also sells to a lot of law enforcement agencies.

The medical examiner made the ID offer prints.

The victim was 29-year-old Melissa Ramirez.

She has kids.

She has a family that lives in Rio Bravo, which is a municipality just south of Laredo.

Law enforcement knew Melissa as a drug user and sex worker.

To her family, she was something else entirely.

Every time we would hang out with each other, we would just laugh.

It was very fun to be around with her.

Gracie Ramirez was Melissa's sister-in-law.

We were like sisters.

We were super close to each other.

Melissa's mom likes to remember her daughter as she was.

She got good grades.

I never struggled with her.

I never had problems with her.

That was before her early teens, before a bipolar diagnosis that went untreated.

Gracie says Melissa never let on to her family, that she'd turned to drugs and then sex work.

She really kept her life split in two, didn't she?

She was very good.

She really kept her life split in two, didn't she?

She was very private to her life.

Still, when Melissa would leave for days at a time, her family knew it couldn't be for anything good.

So she would come visit me.

I would beg her to stay with me.

I would feed her.

I would give her everything she needed.

But she just insisted that she needed a head out.

But she wouldn't say where?

No, she would never tell me where.

Nor her, her brother.

She wouldn't tell anybody.

Now Melissa had met a brutal end.

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A female was found deceased.
When it comes to news about the under-served and under-covered,
people in Laredo usually turn to Priscilla Villareal.
We're live, FYI.
We're live.
Anyone say hi?
Hi, everybody.
To her more than 200,000 followers,
Priscilla is known as La Gordiloca.
La Gordiloca, the big crazy woman.
Thank you.
Everybody says the fat crazy to everybody.
She deals mostly in crime,
but unlike traditional news outlets,
her reporting is done off the cuff
via Facebook live streams,
as events are unfolding.
And so, if something's going down in Laredo,
La Gordiloca usually knows about it.
They call me and say,
hey, there's a chase here by, you know, Central Laredo.
And you can get to it.
I'm up and going.
That rawness and immediacy seems to keep Laredo
clicking on her.
Now La Gordiloca was asking the same questions
as Melissa's family.
Who'd want Melissa dead?
I have no idea.
She didn't.
But maybe Melissa did.
Investigators heard that about three weeks
before her murder,
Melissa had some kind of premonition.
We were at the kitchen table.
She said, I need to say something.
We just stopped what we were doing.
And she said, I'm not going to be here for long.
Someone's going to kill me.
She didn't tell you who that was.
She never said who it was.
She just said, someone's going to point me
with a gun like this.
She said somebody was going to shoot her in the head.

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Yes.

And prosecutor Alanis, who was on this from the start, says forensics back up the story

Melissa so chillingly foretold.

She did have a gunshot wound to around her wrist area, one by her jaw and one to her head.

It feels like she's put her hand up.

That's exactly right.

That's exactly right.

Melissa's premonition came true.

Soon police had more than just a sense that they were headed in the right direction.

And at this moment, police and other agencies are surrounding a home in Las Cuesta subdivision.

Investigators in Laredo, Texas were working the murder of Melissa Ramirez, found dead on the side of a desolate road.

The murders of sex workers can be problematic for investigators.

Victims often don't keep regular hours, making their movements difficult to track.

Investigators in Laredo, Texas were working the murder of Melissa Ramirez, found dead on the side of a desolate road.

The murders of sex workers can be problematic for investigators to keep regular hours, making their movements difficult to track.

They may not know their customers' real names.

And often, their families and friends don't want to speak with police.

Over the years, a number of law enforcement agencies faced criticism that they just didn't work hard enough to solve the murders of sex workers.

And if the Laredo killer was counting on that, then he made a mistake,

because investigators pursued this case aggressively.

Captain Federico Calderón knew he'd need help, so he called in the Texas Rangers, the Department of Public Safety, and the U.S. Border Patrol.

And early on came a lead, a big one.

The residents who'd discovered Melissa's body told of a dark-colored pickup truck parked nearby.

As they approached the truck to see who was inside,

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it sped off.

And when they saw the truck leave,
they noticed that there was a body
where the truck was parked.

One of the group was close enough to jot down a plate number.

A computer search later, investigators were able
to track down the truck's owner that same evening.

And it wasn't at all who they were expecting.

And that person of interest is one of yours.

That's right.

At this time, the Sheriff Department and Texas Rangers
are investigating a murder.

Investigators in Laredo, Texas
are not talking publicly about Melissa Ramirez's killing.

Legordi Loca wasn't talking about anything else.

And at this moment, the police and other agencies
are surrounding a home in Las Cuesta Subdivision.

She was live on Facebook as Laredo PD
staked out the house of a man whose truck
had been seen next to Melissa's body.

It had to have been a little surreal for those officers
because the truck's owner, 32-year-old Rene Arce,
was himself a Laredo police officer.

Even so, as soon as he stepped out his front door,
he was cuffed and brought in for questioning.

A male police officer is either detained
or has not been detained yet,
but it's being said he is responsible
for the murder of this female.

Law enforcement didn't know if that last part was actually true.

It's one of the things they asked Officer Arce about.

Arce said he was in the area that day,
but had nothing to do with any murder.

He was just checking out real estate.

Investigators kept at him.

So not the caliber of weapon that killed Melissa.

Of course, plenty of officers own more than one gun.

It can't be lost on you that the Laredo police officer
will have access to 40 caliber federal ammunition.

That's a reasonable conclusion.

Arce insisted it wasn't him.

You go through his house and his truck?

Yes.

Anything?

Weapons were recovered from his house.
Yes, except none matched the murder weapon or the ammo.
Still, it was strange.
He's parked right next to a body and he doesn't see it?
That's what he said.
With no probable cause, they let him go.
Soon investigators were following a new lead.
Melissa's mom mentioned a suspicious man
who'd been with her daughter the week before.
She came with a man.
I didn't know him.
She was unnerved enough that she told Gracie about the encounter.
She said that he had this weird look on his eyes
whenever he would see Melissa like an evil look.
That, to me, sounds like somebody who at least
is a sort of potential suspect.
Oh, absolutely. He was on our list.
Investigators tracked him down
and it turned out the man was a John, a customer of Melissa's.
It happens to be that while the time frame
over the murder occurred,
he was in another location on the road.
He was driving a truck somewhere.
Now you've looked at two specific guys.
The police officer who parked almost right on top of Melissa's body
and the guy who'd been a customer of hers,
you don't get a good hit of either one of those guys.
We're nowhere closer than we were the day of the actual murder
and we resorted to what cops do best
and that's being nosy and talking to people.
That meant scouring the corners of San Bernardo.
One of the names you hear when you're building a profile
of who Melissa was is Claudine Loira.
Correct. They worked in the same area.
They were acquainted. They knew each other.
Both prostitutes, both on drugs.
Correct.
Investigators thought Claudine might know who it was
that Melissa so feared, except she was nowhere to be found.
They put out the word among other law enforcement agencies,
but Claudine didn't turn up.
Possible that she heard you guys were looking for her
and was keeping her head down?
That is a possibility, for sure.

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Ten days after Melissa's murder,
they finally found Claudine Loira.
She wasn't talking.
She's been shot.
She's been shot.
It was about two miles from where Melissa's body was found,
also by the side of the road,
nearby the same 40-caliber federal ammunition.
Claudine was taken to a hospital.
She did not survive.
It's starting to smell like it's the same guy
and we have the strong inclination
after processing that crime scene
that we're probably dealing with the same person.
Someone's killing prostitutes.
Someone's killing prostitutes with a 40-caliber handgun.
Kane Brown to talk about his extraordinary rise
from singing viral cover songs on social media
to filling stadiums across the country and around the world.
You can get our conversation now for free
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Really?
Well, try Dateline Premium on Apple Podcasts now.
It was a hot end to the summer of 2018,
and Laredo was simmering.
Within 10 days, two women had been found executed
and investigators thought it was the work of one killer.
They'd focused on two potential suspects,
neither panned out.
People were worried. People were worried.
People were worried.
People were worried.
People were worried. People were scared.
Now this was real, and you can feel the tension.
I would just order everything to get it delivered,
rather go into the store.
We were all scared. We were like, what is going on?
Law enforcement had been looking for Claudine Loera.
Now she was gone too.
It wasn't until Thursday that I heard of another female being found.

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Claudine's sister Collette heard about the second murder from NBC affiliate KGNS News.
She was alive when deputies arrived but later died at the hospital.
And I kept thinking, man, poor lady.
She must have suffered a lot. I go poor family.
She had no way of knowing it was Claudine, and when she found out, it hit her hard.
I think my whole block heard me scream.
And just to think, you know, here I am, feeling sorry for this person the day before saying, you know, how sad for the family.
She must have suffered, and next thing you know, wear that family.
She rushed to tell Claudine's daughter Ciara at work, but didn't have to say a word.
And I could just see the look on their face.
I knew my mom was gone.
Collette remembered how close she and Claudine were growing up in Laredo.
She would help me sneak in my frogs into the house.
I love to dress them up in Barbie clothes.
Actual frogs. Yes.
Ciara knew her mother had suffered trauma beginning in her youth.
What happened to her growing up?
That's a hard story for you to tell.
She was assaulted by somebody who lived behind her, and I don't think anything was ever done about it.
She was how old?
I believe under the age of 14.
She was damaged by that?
Yeah, very damaged.
Ciara says her mom had always been there for her children, but then got together with an old boyfriend, someone the family felt was bad news.
She started using heroin.
It was like 15, and things, you know, she just changed.
She would only wear, like, long sleeves.
So you knew something was wrong?
Yeah. It didn't make sense.
It wasn't long before Claudine lost custody of her children.
I would be lying if I didn't say there weren't times that I asked her, you know, like, when is my love gonna be enough?
And what was her answer?
It was that it was enough.
She was just heavily addicted to a drug,

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and it took over, but my love was enough,
and she always wanted me to know that,
you know, to separate the drug from her and to understand.
But I couldn't.
After that, Claudine turned to sex work to feed her habit.
Her family never stopped loving her.
Who didn't you think it killed her?
My thought was him.
The boyfriend?
The boyfriend.
Because who else?
Good question, because the boyfriend had an airtight alibi.
Investigators did find a person of interest after looking through Claudine's phone.
Shortly before her death,
she'd been communicating with a guy who went by the nickname, Chone.
Do you have a sheet?
He did, you know, a little bit of everything.
They went to his address, parked by his house, and waited.
He's not there.
He's not there, but as luck would have it, he shows up.
And as soon as he sees that there's people waiting for him outside his house,
he takes off at a high rate of speed and...
And you're at a pursuit.
They chase him, he gets away.
All of a sudden, we feel like maybe we got our guy.
And then Chone himself contacted police and came in for an interview.
He said he was with Claudine, but before she was murdered.
And he says that at some point in that late evening or night,
he believes that she goes her way, he goes his way.
That's the last that they saw.
Which is exactly what the murderer would say.
That's what, yeah, exactly.
We definitely thought we were heading in the right direction.
They thought, finally, they were getting close.
Then investigators got a call that would make them realize it wasn't Chone,
it wasn't Officer Arce, and it wasn't the trucker.
And Ranger Salinas tells me, hey, one of our troopers ran into a female
who she frantic, she's scared, she says that somebody tried to kill her
with a handgun.
Like the two other victims, this woman worked San Bernardo.
Except this woman survived.
Had she been face to face with the killer?
September 14th, 2018, two nights after Claudine Loera's killing,
a Texas DPS trooper was pumping gas into his cruiser just before 9pm

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when a frantic woman hurried toward him.
She wasn't wearing a blouse, as she breathlessly told him she'd just been attacked by the man she was with.
That's when the trooper turned on his body cam audio.
He had a white truck.
The woman was 26-year-old Erika Pena.
She told him she and the man had arrived at the gas station just a few minutes earlier.
And then after they parked, he put a gun to her head.
I came running, he wanted to, he took out his gun, and he wanted to get me back inside.
And I started yelling, help me, help me.
Erika used her wits to escape.
She said as the man grabbed her blouse, she threw the passenger door open, slithered out of her top, and ran to safety.
So he was trying to grab you?
He was trying to grab me.
Erika admitted she worked on the streets of San Bernardo, where the man had picked her up earlier that evening.
She described him as a regular customer.
So you know who he is?
His name is David.
He's tall, and he has boots.
She's wearing boots and a oil field worker.
I think he said he was a supervisor somewhere.
Like in the oil field?
Yes, almost.
She told him something changed in the air when the subject of the murders of Melissa and Claudine came up in conversation.
He started talking right, and I told him, I heard that in their peeping, they're peaking people to investigate, right?
The girls, and he's like, well, what are the girls saying?
What have you heard?
And I'm like, I don't know.
The guy pointed a gun.
At the mention of the murders, the trooper decided to contact investigators on the off chance it was connected.
She's in shock, man.
And she was trying to mention something about the other two girls,

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and I got nervous.

They asked him to bring Erica to the substation,
where Captain Calderon and the Texas Ranger were waiting.
With a Texas rainstorm pounding on a galvanized roof,
Erica laid it out.

I was standing there, and he passed by.

He passed, and he turned around.

Get in, babe.

She said earlier that night

David had taken her to his house,
where she'd been a couple of times before.

She's able to describe the walkway,
the driveway, the inside of the house,
you know, the neighborhood it's in.

Erica repeated what she'd told the trooper.

When the conversation turned to the murders,
David's demeanor suddenly changed.

He seemed nervous, agitated.

He said, I'm scared, he said,

because I was one of the last ones
to be connected to him.

Nothing about DNA.

Erica began to suspect David was the killer,
while inside his house, with no clear way out.

She starts getting a bad feeling,
like she is going to die,
so she wants to leave.

She wanted out of that house.

He talked her into going with him
to that gas station to get some food.

Luckily, the DPS trooper happened to be there.

So maybe that you're gone.

It's looking like one of the best leads
we've had up to now.

Erica remembered something else
David had said.

It looked like he had been in the military.

Close.

After her interview with detectives,
a slew of investigators bundled themselves
and Erica into three cars,
and told her to show them David's house.

She directed them to a home in a nice neighborhood
on the north side of Laredo.

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The house with a walkway,
just how she described it.
The entrance to the house, how she described it.
To investigators, it all seemed to line up.
There was no white dodge in sight.
They decided to wait.
Who lives at that address?
We found out that it's owned by Juan David Ortiz
and wife, is what it says on the record.
And who's Juan David Ortiz?
We think he's some sort of oil field worker or something.
There are two vehicles registered to that particular house.
One of them is a Dodge 2500 white pickup truck,
which fits a bill for an oil field type truck.
That truck had disabled veteran plates,
suggesting David had served in the military.
So far, everything Erica had told them was ringing true.
It feels like you're getting close.
It feels like we're onto something, finally.
They put a bolo out for Ortiz's truck.
Then, another twist.
We get a call of another body that's found off of IH 35.
The killer of Laredo wasn't done yet.
Law enforcement was on the lookout
for a white Dodge Ram belonging to Juan David Ortiz.
The man they desperately wanted to question
about the murders of Melissa Ramirez and Claudine Loera.
Soon, the truck was spotted near San Bernardo,
the moment captured on security video.
The troopers, they're driving by.
They see the vehicle parked at a gas station.
That's the truck right there. You walk through the site.
When he emerged, they confronted him.
Stop right there! Stop! Stop! Stop!
Stop! Is this your truck? Is this your truck?
Okay, all right. Turn around.
He started telling the troopers,
hey, you're freaking me out.
Okay, okay, I'm going to explain to you.
Then he runs from the troopers.
Okay, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey!
They chased Ortiz for a few blocks, then lost him.
No, bro. He went inside here. He's in here.
He couldn't have gone far on foot, so the SWAT team was called in.

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Officers suited up and set up a perimeter,
then proceeded to comb the entire city block.
Hey, Ortiz! Come out!
Hey, police!
There was no sign of him.
Is she really?
It was a scene custom-made for La Gordiloca.
She was live-streaming this latest news
and the community most affected by it.
I just really don't know what's going on yet,
but it's very serious.
They're all armed. They're all with their bulletproof vests.
It's probably those recent tests that just happened.
I can only speculate. Like I said, nothing's confirmed.
As the search was underway, there's another one.
We get a call of another body that's found off of IH 35.
The deputy makes it out to the body, and he calls me,
and he says, hey, I think you all have another one.
It was the body of Geselda Cantu.
She was also a sex worker, also shot to death on a Webb County road,
and near her, federal 40-caliber casings.
And then came a phone call from the Border Patrol.
It changed everything investigators thought they understood
about the man they'd been pursuing.
He's not an old field worker.
He's a Border Patrol agent.
He's a supervisory Border Patrol agent.
That had to hit you like a ton of bricks.
We weren't expecting that. I can tell you that.
We were not expecting that.
Other Border Patrol agents had connected the dots
when Ortiz posted some messages on Facebook just moments before
while he was on the run, telling his wife and kids he loved them,
along with Doc Ortiz checks out farewell.
Like he's expecting not to survive.
Like he's expecting not to survive, correct.
The search narrowed to a hotel parking garage.
You two guys, let's start leading the way.
Let's start going to where we think this guy is.
Let's do it slowly and carefully.
So that's when we split into two sections
and we were making our way up to the parking lot.
Investigator Noe Gonzalez led the SWAT team up that parking garage ramp
with Laredo PD, DPS Troopers, Calderon and Salinas

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all following close behind.

As they made their way through the fourth and last floor, all that remained to be cleared were a lone pickup truck and some cement pillars.

That was either the last four pillars or that truck.

Gonzalez and others at the top of the stack covered the pillars.

He directed the rest of the team toward the truck.

Get down! Get down!

And there he was, hiding in that truck bed.

He doesn't put up a fight.

He doesn't.

It would not have been the wisest thing to do, but no, he didn't.

It was around 2.30 in the morning

by the time they placed Juan, David, Ortiz under arrest.

They got the guy. It's confirmed.

Suspect is in custody.

And then he was inside an interrogation room.

What's his demeanor?

Scared, arrogant, ashamed?

I would say arrogant to the right word.

You hit the nail on the head there.

He's basically laughing that he was able to outrun the troopers.

Who's the trooper I smoke, man?

The trooper couldn't keep up with me, dude.

Tell him he needs to work out tomorrow, man.

Two of them.

Ortiz repeatedly denied knowing any of the victims.

I don't know who to tell, I don't know.

I don't know who to tell.

She acted today.

I have no recollection.

And the evidence is showing us.

What do they have?

You guys have the evidence?

Like I said, I don't recall.

Investigators recalled finding Erica's bag in his truck.

They're gonna figure it out.

I don't know why there's stuff in your car.

Over more than eight hours, they took his clothes, had a man with a badge change into prisoner orange, and they pressed him.

Training.

Training.

We got a case on.

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We got the bullets.
We got the bullets.
We got some pretty intense lines.
D.A. Alanese was watching on video.
I'll never forget the time was 11.24 in the morning.
He looks at Captain Carter at all and says,
can you take him off?
It all started, though.
He keeps taking us off.
I'm not gonna touch him.
He says, I'm not gonna hurt you.
And I'm sitting there watching like you're watching the Super Bowl,
you know, and I'm like, take him off.
Take him off.
Do it.
He's asking for trust here.
Yeah.
So, Carter on goes to take off his handcuffs.
I look at everybody in the room and I say, get ready.
Here it comes.
And then...
And here it came.
I was continuing grading on time,
but this is where the monster came out.
It all started, though.
Investigators were trying to learn more from Ortiz,
and LaGordiloca was live with the latest.
The man who was detained last night
and the parking lot of that hotel is a Border Patrol agent.
She told her audience the man who had sparked such fear
in the city of Laredo for the last two weeks had been caught.
We had or we might have a serial killer in our hands.
A captive Ortiz was speaking to a captivated audience.
He said he'd taken his San Bernardo friend
to score drugs late Sunday night,
then got upset when she got high and passed out in his truck.
After a while, the camp is drying out again.
He said Melissa began yelling she wanted out of his truck,
and that was all it took.
And I asked him specifically what gun did he use.
He said he used a service weapon.
The service weapon issued by the Border Patrol,
along with the federal ammo his employer supplied.
And having made the jump from lawman to murderer,

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Ortiz said he wanted to do it again.
Ten days after he killed Melissa,
he picked up Claudine Loera.
He says she was curious about where Melissa's body had been found,
so he started to drive her out there.
Ortiz said he told her to get out,
then shot her as she turned her back.
Now, Calderon and his team had to ponder this.
Remember how investigators trying to solve Melissa's murder
had reached out to the rest of law enforcement,
including the Border Patrol,
looking for Melissa's friend, Claudine Loera.
Ortiz's job with the Border Patrol was to work in the BIC,
the Border Intelligence Center.
You think Ortiz heard that you guys were looking for Claudine Loera?
And went out and found her and killed her?
I swear, you know, the coincidence is just too big, too strong.
I think that he heard the call come in.
I think that he was on full alert.
And thought, I've got to cover my tracks.
And thought, I've got to get to Claudine before they do.
Ortiz confessed to killing Claudine,
and Melissa, and Giselda,
and assaulting Erika.
And he wasn't done.
He tells us, and there's one more you probably don't even know about.
He sent them to a gravel mound, 15 miles outside of town.
A bunch of cops that I'm there with,
they all burst out of the room to get in their patrol cars
and drive out there.
It's where they found 28-year-old Janelle Ortiz.
Same last name, but no relation to the man who killed her.
Janelle Ortiz fit the profile?
Fit the profile, same work type.
Worked in the same area, also a drug user.
When law enforcement caught up to Ortiz at that gas station,
he had just returned from killing Janelle.
I'm trying to find you, but there's something I know
that you guys are looking for me because of Erika.
So this time the whole line is coming to an end.
Ortiz knew he was being hunted by law enforcement,
and so accelerated his killing spree.
And if you hadn't caught him, he wouldn't have stopped.
He told us that he was going to keep going until he was caught.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Streets of Laredo

In the room, Ortiz offered motives that made him sound virtuous. He described murdering sex workers in cold blood as a kind of public service. I'll continue writing on time, but this is where a monster came up. And I was driving. I was like, what the f*** are these people? They don't have jobs. They're all f***ing f***ing f***ing. This sounds stupid. I want to clean up the streets and I always gotta f***ing do it. Had he just made that up to avoid the shame of being a cop and was also a customer? Or had he been afraid the women he'd been with could have exposed him? You think what set Ortiz off was that he let the women get too close? Yes. I think what ended up happening, I think there was a power shift here. And starting with Melissa, I think she crossed over, you know, from her world into his world. And that gave her a lever. She becomes now a threat to his livelihood, to his family, his children, to his job. DA Alamiz had enough to charge Juan David Ortiz with four counts of murder, one count of unlawful restraint, one count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and two counts of evading arrest. Melissa Ramirez's mom, Christina, recalled how hard it was seeing Ortiz for the first time at one of his hearings. I saw him and my heart accelerated, and I got so angry that I stood up and I shouted at him that he was a murderer. He just gave this smirk. And that literally sent chills down my spine. Like, why is it, you know, you have this poor lady screaming at you, and you're just like... Yeah. Ortiz said his confession was coerced and pleaded not guilty. Four years later, a jury didn't buy it. Their verdict took less than five hours. Juan David Ortiz was sentenced that very night, life in prison, with no possibility of parole. It was a long fall for a decorated combat medic, a rising star at the Border Patrol, and a married father of three. Until Supervisor had all this power, all this knowledge, masters educated, I mean, the list goes on. For the victims' families, the verdict brought some relief.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Streets of Laredo

I was very happy.
I wanted to yell.
I wanted to scream of excitement,
and he just looked...
I think he didn't care.
No emotion.
No emotion at all.
But I felt so happy.
Ciara's life also changed in one good way.
And now you work for the Sheriff's Department.
I do.
How is that?
I love it.
I think I am in the right place,
and I know my mom would be so proud of me.
I know she's proud of me.
That's all for now.
I'm Lester Holt.
Thanks for joining us.
Thanks for joining us.