

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE



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Subject: Bus Driver Enters Guilty Plea in Fatal Incident at Airport
Date: July 02,2014
Category: Motor Vehicle
Defendant(s): Fidel Ortez

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray announced today that Fidel Ortez, 48, of West New York, pled guilty to knowingly leaving the scene of a motor vehicle collision that resulted in the death of Jeffrey Zeisler, 61, of Howell.

On Nov. 12, 2012, Zeisler was found dead at Newark Liberty International Airport after being struck by a bus driven by Ortez, a driver for Academy Bus lines, according to Assistant Prosecutor Justin Edwab who handled the case along with Assistant Prosecutor Harry Moskowitz.

Appearing before the Honorable Ronald D. Wigler, the Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division, in Essex County, on Monday, Ortez pled guilty to leaving the scene of a motor vehicle accident, a third degree crime.

Under the terms of the plea agreement the state recommended he serve 364 days in the Essex County Correctional Facility after which he must serve a probationary term set by the judge.

On Nov. 12, 2012, Ortez, was working for Academy Bus. He was responsible for transporting individuals from Newark International Liberty Airport parking lots to the Airport terminals. Around 4:00 a.m., before he had picked up any passengers, Ortez drove over and killed Zeisler inside Parking Lot 6.

After driving over Zeisler, Ortez exited his bus, checked Zeisler for a pulse and then drove away. Approximately, two minutes later Ortez called the dispatcher for Academy bus and said there was a man lying in the middle of Parking Lot 6 who appeared to be impaired. He never reported that he drove over the man.

Sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 9, 2014. The defendant has no prior indictable convictions.

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