



## CITY OF BARTOW

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

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### **18 Year-Old Bartow Man Charged with First Degree Murder**

(Bartow, FL - May 19, 2025) Polk County Sheriff's Office homicide detectives have arrested 18 year-old, Moses Ojeda, for the murder of his roommate in Bartow on Sunday, May 18. The victim, 81 year-old Patrick Benway, was living in a group home managed by ET Home Care, LLC, along with three other roommates. Ojeda had just moved in a day prior after being released from a local hospital. Ojeda told detectives that he did not have any problems with the victim and described him as a good person.

The arrest follows a call regarding a person bleeding and in need of medical attention at 2226 Blue Bird Ave. received by the Bartow Police and Fire Departments at approximately 12:48 pm on Sunday. Upon arrival, the victim was found lying unresponsive on the floor next to his bed with blood around his body. Bartow Police and Fire personnel rendered first aid / life saving measures and discovered multiple apparent puncture marks to the victim's left chest area. Mr. Benway was pronounced deceased at the scene at approximately 1:30 pm.

With the victim's injuries being consistent with an apparent homicide, The Bartow Police Department requested assistance from the Polk County Sheriff's Office Homicide Unit.

During the investigation, Ojeda confirmed that he entered the victim's bedroom where he was lying in bed and stabbed him multiple times. The victim did not physically resist, but did ask, according to Ojeda, "Why would you want to do this to me?" before succumbing to his injuries. Ojeda stated he has no regrets and he wanted to kill him because he was "already dying."

Following the attack, Ojeda told deputies that he cleaned the knife used and put it back in the kitchen, then removed his blood-stained clothing and placed it in his laundry basket. All of the evidence gathered by detectives was consistent with the suspect's statements regarding his stabbing the victim.

The suspect has no prior criminal record.

Ojeda was arrested and charged with first-degree murder and tampering with physical evidence and later booked into the Polk County Jail.

"This was an isolated incident," stated Bartow Police Chief Stephen Walker. "The suspect has been arrested and there is no threat to the community.

"I want to acknowledge and thank Sheriff Grady Judd and the Polk County Sheriff's Office for their outstanding assistance with this case," Walker added.

"This was a senseless and tragic act of violence. Our detectives, forensic investigators, and Bartow Police Department officers worked diligently to take Ojeda into custody and gather evidence to hold him accountable," added Grady Judd, Polk County Sheriff. The Polk County Sheriff's Department is assisting with the investigation.

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