


# Friends mourn 'full of life,' popular UBC grad student murdered in Mexico

By ELAINE O'CONNOR, The Province January 7, 2012

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**Ximena Osegueda Magana, left, a UBC grad student, and her boyfriend Alejandro Honorio Santamaria were found slain on a beach in Mexico in late December.**

**Photograph by: Online, Facebook**

Friends of slain UBC PhD student Ximena Osegueda Magaña are crushed after a search for the missing 39-year-old ended with the discovery of her body on a Mexican beach last week.

Magaña and her boyfriend, Alejandro Honorio Santamaria, 38, were last seen on Dec. 14 while on a trip to Mexico near Bahías de Huatulco.

The Hispanic studies teaching assistant, who had previously studied at McGill University, where she earned a B.A. in political science and a Master's in Hispanic studies, was in the country to do research for her colonial Latin American literature dissertation on the history of the town and the Cross of Santa Cruz Huatulco.

“What happened to Ximena is a great tragedy and a huge loss,” Jon Beasley-Murray, an assistant professor in the department of French, Italian and Hispanic studies at UBC who knew the academic, told The Province Friday.

“She will be very much missed in the department here at UBC. She was tremendously full of life and enthusiasm, and very popular with both fellow students and faculty. The news has come as a shock to everyone.”

The family notified police when they didn't hear from the couple. At first they feared she had been kidnapped, friends reported. But no ransom demand came.

Family member Hector Osegueda pleaded for information on her whereabouts on Facebook before she was discovered. “We are very worried,” he said.

Her mother, Maria del Carmen Magaña y Pérez, told a local reporter that she became suspicious after her home in Bahías de Huatulco was robbed and Ximena's van, among other things, was stolen. She tried to call her daughter to alert her, but couldn't reach her. That van was also found later, abandoned in Oaxaca.

Their car, a red Chevrolet, was found abandoned on Dec. 17 near the airport in Oaxaca, its license plates removed.

Their bodies were discovered at a Punta Arena beach last week. They had been bound and stabbed in the neck and burned, according to Oaxaca's state attorney's office, the Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado.

Neither Osegueda Magana nor Santamaria, said to be the son of a cardiologist and an auto racing fan, had known criminal ties.

Condolences poured in for the Mexico native and capoeira dancer and her partner.

“Ximena, the prayers of all your loved ones accompany you and guide you to find your new path,” friend Lorena Casillas said on a memorial Facebook site.

“Today two stars shine in the sky and from there light the path of those who were still on this earth ... a big hug to all Osegueda Magaña family ... my deepest condolences,” said Grace Mendez.

“Sorry for the loss of these good people. Rest in peace. Hopefully [there will be] justice,” said friend Michael Kagan of Burnaby.

“I'll always remember you fondly,” said Terence Strickman Aguilar.

The beach where the couple were found had been the site of another grisly discovery just a day before the couple disappeared, when the body of a 23-year-old tour operator, Jesús Alberto Altamirano Hernández, was found. He had been bound in much the same manner as the couple.

A memorial service for the Mexico City native, who had also taught at Mexico's Universidad del Mar, is being held in Mexico City in the district of San Rafael on Saturday. More than 150 people are expected to attend.

This is the second death of a B.C. resident in Mexico reported this week.

Saltspring Island's Robin's Wood was shot and killed during a robbery in the seaside town of Malaque in Jalisco state on Tuesday.

Police reportedly arrested a man in connection with the attack on Wednesday, but he was later released.

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<b>Nessa</b> 9:00 AM on 1/9/2012 I've been boycotting Mexico since my friend was killed there in 2007. The authorities said he committed suicide by jumping off a balcony, even though there was tons of blood, and obvious signs of a struggle in his hotel room. The authorities will say ANYTHING in a case like that to protect Mexico's tourism. Mexico is violent, dirty & cheap. I truly feel for the family and friends of this beautiful young couple.	Score: 0	
<b>onyxescence</b> 12:04 PM on 1/8/2012 ProfLogie Our preconceptions about Mexico? 35,000 people murdered in Mexico since 2006 = almost 7,000 a year. That's just murdered and how many more victims of crime? Canadians or Mexicans or something else this isn't a country I'd care to visit no matter how many hot tourist spots it has. And apparently rape is hardly even a crime worth reporting there. Sounds like a great country - to avoid and if people have a social conscience they should be avoiding it until it cleans up its act.	Score: 0	
<b>Name withheld</b> 5:44 AM on 1/8/2012 <i>This comment was left by a user who has been blocked by our staff.</i>	Score: 1	
<b>Jonathan2</b> 10:22 PM on 1/7/2012 @Kahanamoku  Finally the truth.  It sure took a long time for someone with real experience with the Mexican "modus operandi" to give the rest of our Canadians, a sample of the corruption there.  ...and we're talking everyone...is involved, from the top to the bottom..and sideways along the way.  I enjoyed my vacations there up until 2008 when i was "jacked up" for "cash" from the "Justice system".  I refused to co-operate for three days until they finally kicked me out and I had to walk most of the way back to Puerto Vallarta. Oddly enough the equivalent to our "crown prosecutor", whom spoke perfect english, ordered my release.  I don't go to Mexico any more...I don't need the drama.	Score: 4	
<b>anon414650123</b>	Score: 3	

<p>6:44 PM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>My father was murdered in Puerto Vallarta on May 30 2011. While its not the victims fault to be brutally attacked and killed, there needs to be the understanding that Mexico is not Canada. You can't behave as if you were at home, rather one needs to act as a guest in another country where brutality is a way of life.</p> <p>Answers, and resolution will probably not come to this family and the Canadian consulate will only act as a figurehead with no authority. My condolences to this womans family and to thata of the mana from Saltspring.</p> <p>I feel your pain</p>	<p>Report Abuse</p>
<p>Spklerdude <span style="float: right;">Score: 2</span></p> <p>3:42 PM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>"Mexican police in the northern city of Torreon found the severed heads of five people killed in a suspected outbreak of drug gang violence."</p> <p>Q: Hey honey, where would you like to go on vacation this year?</p> <p>A: I hear Mexico is a great place, cheap, sunshine, cervesa's and a perfectly safe place for tourists!</p>	<p> Report Abuse</p>
<p>spicyfood <span style="float: right;">Score: -3</span></p> <p>1:26 PM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>Are the people who get murdered in Mexico dealing in drugs or not? The truth, please.</p>	<p> Report Abuse</p>
<p>ProfLogie <span style="float: right;">Score: -7</span></p> <p>12:44 PM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>Kahanamoku, I am at the airport. My flight leaves in an hour and I have only returned home to Canada for xmas. I don't work for any agency or government. But I know that the threat of violence to tourists is overplayed, and that the best way to make the difficult situation in Mexico WORSE is to cut off the tourist trade. Most Mexicans know not to slay the goose that lays the golden egg; even criminals and police.</p>	<p> Report Abuse</p>
<p>Spklerdude <span style="float: right;">Score: 0</span></p> <p>12:23 PM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>Great, if you enjoy it so much in Mexico, remain there, may good luck, good fortune and the heavens be keeping a watchful eye out for the safety of you and your wife, one prudent tip though, get a permit and start packing a 44 magnum under your t-shirt</p>	<p> Report Abuse</p>
<p>larrybang <span style="float: right;">Score: -7</span></p> <p>7:52 AM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>To all you ignorant and uninformed people who wrote a comment. Get your heads out of the sand and start to be concerned about your own back yard. Check out the number of all the murders just in Edmonton and Vancouver last year. 15 murders of Canadians in Mexico since 2006 out of over 4 million travelers. I have been coming to all parts of Mexico for over 30 years and I feel safer here than walking down Hasting St. In Vancouver.my wife and myself have both been in hospitals in Mexico and received a lot better care than in BC. Probably most Of the people who have commented have never travelled to Mexico</p>	<p> Report Abuse</p>
<p>Name withheld <span style="float: right;">Score: 0</span></p> <p>4:31 AM on 1/7/2012</p> <p><i>This comment was left by a user who has been blocked by our staff.</i></p>	
<p>Kahanamoku <span style="float: right;">Score: 2</span></p> <p>3:09 AM on 1/7/2012</p> <p>and of course when you arrive at a hospital in Mexico they will extort you for thousands of dollars in cash - whether or not you have insurance - and actually bar you from leaving the country.</p> <p>I have personally been to Mexico 7 times and I will never step foot in that country again.</p>	<p> Report Abuse</p>

I have experienced and seen all kinds of stuff go down in that country. You hear maybe 1% of what actually happens there.

Mexico has dangerously high kidnapping rates and is number one in accidental tourist deaths. Again google mexico balcony deaths and be amazed.

Kahanamoku  
2:59 AM on 1/7/2012  
@proflogie

Score: 2



If you are not a govt shill or someone working in the tourist industry you are totally ignorant about what goes on down in Mexico. Whether the police were involved or not the fact is that when any crime occurs in Mexico no one will help and you are legally considered guilty until proven innocent.

The police have been known to beat people to death in prisons, stand guard outside during robberies, take bribes, etc. If that doesnt scare you enough the fact that they nor any other official will assist any tourist if a death or rape occurs should.

Oh and the medical system. Google this yourself.. If you seriously hurt yourself at a resort you will be lucky to receive any kind of medical attn. Quite often hotel staff will actually impede anyone from assisting. When an ambulance arrives after 45 minutes you will be lucky if the medical staff has trauma experience.

Name withheld  
12:45 AM on 1/7/2012

Score: -3

*This comment has been removed because it contains material which was deemed inappropriate.*

Maz\_Ted  
10:15 PM on 1/6/2012

Score: -4



This is truly a tragety and my simpathy goes out but lets look at the big picture. Since 2006 there have been over 6 million Canadians who have vsited the country of Mexico and only 15 have been murdered. There are that many who get murdered in the lower mailland and Frase valley. More Canadians die in the major cities of our country each year than have been killed in the whole country of Mexico. So lets not call the kettle black until we clean up our own back yard.

not an optimist  
10:10 PM on 1/6/2012

Score: 2



If you're saying I'd never go back to Mexico then you're....  
DEAD RIGHT!

Name withheld  
7:59 PM on 1/6/2012

Score: 0

*This comment was left by a user who has been blocked by our staff.*

ProfLogie  
7:30 PM on 1/6/2012

Score: -6






Anon, the country and government of Mexico did not murder these people, CRIMINALS murdered these people. All the diplomatic talk Canada can muster will not help to catch these killers, unless you propose sending in the RCMP to assist.

And to clarify, the victim was a Mexican national who disapeared from her home town, in the house her parents own. Her only Canadian connection mentioned was her time spent at UBC. But the media right now is hot for confirming our preconceptions of widespread Mexican violence, particularly to tourists.

Name withheld  
7:15 PM on 1/6/2012


Score: 3

*This comment was left by a user who has been blocked by our staff.*

<p>anon312166114 <span style="float: right;">Score: 2</span>  6:39 PM on 1/6/2012  This is a very serious incident that has happened. This is not some accidental death. When is this Country and/or Province going to stand up for it's innocent victims. When other Countries KILL our citizen's, something SHOULD be said! Something SHOULD be done about it!</p>	 Report Abuse
<p>axiom7 <span style="float: right;">Score: 2</span>  6:10 PM on 1/6/2012  to all those people who were commenting on the death of a Saltspring man last week saying Mexico is safe and Vancouver has more murders...denial is a powerful thing. This kind of thing happens all the time there and more and more frequently all the time. If the country wasn't so corrupt everywhere they might have better law enforcement.</p>	 Report Abuse
<p>Name withheld <span style="float: right;">Score: -1</span>  4:47 PM on 1/6/2012  <i>This comment has been removed because it contains material which was deemed inappropriate.</i></p>	
<p>8CY8 <span style="float: right;">Score: 0</span>  4:24 PM on 1/6/2012  Traveling to Mexico,Mmmmmmmmm.....</p>	 Report Abuse
<p>Name withheld <span style="float: right;">Score: 1</span>  3:58 PM on 1/6/2012  <i>This comment has been removed because it contains material which was deemed inappropriate.</i></p>	

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