



**Andrew A. Bain**  
**STATE ATTORNEY**  
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
ORANGE AND OSCEOLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

M. Ryan Williams  
CHIEF ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY

Jamie McManus  
DEPUTY CHIEF ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY

Kamilah Perry  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GENERAL COUNSEL

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**Contact:**

Public Information Office  
415 N. Orange Ave  
Orlando, FL 32801  
[PIO@sao9.org](mailto:PIO@sao9.org)  
[SAO9th.com](http://SAO9th.com)

## **Grand Jury Indicts Suspect in 2018 Murder of 15-year-old**

**ORANGE COUNTY, FL** – In a significant development in the 2018 homicide of a Boone High School student, a grand jury has returned a murder indictment against DeAndre Eugene Florence, 23. Florence is charged with first-degree murder in the shooting death of Alejandro “Alex” Vargas Martinez. He is also charged with robbery by snatching, racketeering, three counts of grand theft motor vehicle and dealing in stolen property.

State Attorney Andrew Bain stands united with the Orange County Sheriff’s Office and the Attorney General’s Office in ensuring Florence is held accountable for the murder of an innocent teen.

Florence was part of a dangerous criminal enterprise which used stolen vehicles to target and steal electronics from persons and businesses and sell them for profit. On Dec. 18, 2018, Martinez, 15, was walking to school and talking to his mother on the phone when the enterprise targeted him. The suspects tried to steal the teen’s cell phone and fatally shot him during the robbery. Florence admitted to detectives to being present during the murder and the motive behind it.

The case remained unsolved for several years, even after deputies named Florence as a person of interest in the case. At the time, Florence was in jail for his involvement in the death of Denim Williams who was killed in another robbery attempt in 2019. Florence eventually took a plea in the Williams case, which resulted in his release from jail earlier this year after time served.

“It is our moral and statutory obligation to ensure those responsible for heinous crimes are held accountable for their actions,” said State Attorney Bain. “Alex Vargas deserves justice. His family, whose lives were torn apart by this heartbreaking loss, deserve justice. It is disheartening that his family has had to wait so long for this moment because the defendant was not able to face prosecution. However, hard prosecutions are part of the job. We are fortunate that due to the relentless efforts of law enforcement and detective Brian Savellie, we are on the path to bringing closure to Alex’s family.”

Over the last three months, the State Attorney’s Office has been working with detectives and the Attorney General’s Office to reach this pivotal moment. State Attorney Bain has cross-sworn the statewide prosecutors handling this case, giving them the authority to operate in Orange County.

Prosecuting this case at the state level enables Florence to be charged with racketeering, ensuring he is also held accountable for his role in the criminal enterprise that led to Alex's murder.

State Attorney Bain said his office will continue to work with detectives and the Attorney General's office to ensure justice for Alex.

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