

## **Supreme Court upholds death sentence of Miami-Dade cop killer**

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The Florida Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the murder conviction and death sentence of Leonardo Franqui, the robber convicted of murdering North Miami Police Officer Steven Bauer in January 1992.

The case at issue for the justices was not Bauer's murder but that of Medley businessman Raul Lopez, who was ambushed and fatally shot one month before Bauer was shot to death during a bank robbery.

The justices upheld a Miami-Dade trial court's decision ruling that Franqui did not prove he was mentally retarded, which would have spared him execution. A 2002 U.S. Supreme Court ruling barred the mentally retarded from execution.

Franqui was part of a band of thugs who ambushed Lopez and the owners of a check-cashing business as they drove to a Hialeah bank in December 1991. Lopez was shot and killed.

One month later, the robbers fatally shot Bauer as the off-duty officer was escorting two bank tellers to a drive-up booth at Kislak National Bank. Franqui was also convicted and sentenced to death for Bauer's murder; he is appealing that case as well.