

Man charged with murder of missing woman is illegal immigrant out on bail after previous DWI arrest: report

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A man reportedly in the U.S. illegally was charged with killing a 19-year-old Maryland woman whose body was discovered off a highway earlier this week.

Hugo Hernandez-Mendez, 35, of Bowie, Maryland, was arrested Thursday in the killing of Dacara Thompson, the Prince George's County Police Department said.

Hernandez-Mendez is an illegal immigrant and had a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer issued on Thursday, according to WJLA-TV.

Prince George's County Police Department told Fox News Digital the department was not releasing the immigration status of Hernandez-Mendez. ICE did not immediately respond when Fox News Digital reached out.

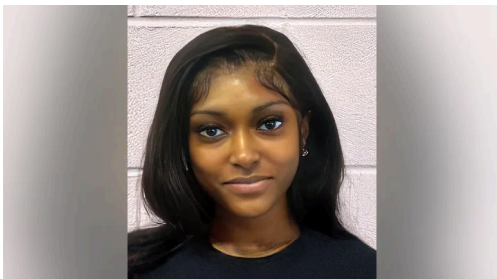
MARYLAND MOTHER KILLED WHEN 4 TEENS IN STOLEN CAR SLAM INTO HER AND HER CHILD



Hugo Hernandez-Mendez, 35, was charged with first- and second-degree murder in Thompson's death. (Prince George's County Police Department)

The news outlet also reported that U.S. Park Police arrested Hernandez-Mendez for a DWI in April, but he was subsequently released pending a court appearance. Fox News Digital reached out to the Park Police but did not immediately hear back.

Thompson's family reported her missing on Aug. 23. On Sunday, her body was discovered dumped in a grassy area near Route 50 in Anne Arundel County.



Dacara Thompson, 19, was found dead on Sunday, over a week after her family reported her missing. Police said they believe she was murdered. (Prince George's County Police Department)

Investigators combed through security footage that showed Thompson had approached a black SUV in the early hours of Aug. 23. She was seen speaking to the driver, according to police, before entering the vehicle. The driver then drove to a home in Bowie.

Detectives executed a search warrant on the home Thursday and uncovered evidence that suggested Thompson had been killed in

the bedroom of the home, police said.

Hernandez-Mendez lived at the home in the bedroom where authorities say the killing happened. Police said he also has access to the black SUV that Thompson was seen entering.

MULTIPLE FATAL CRASHES LINKED TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS SPARK ARRESTS ACROSS US IN RECENT DAYS

Hernandez-Mendez was charged with first- and second-degree murder in Thompson's death.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore released a statement on the death investigation Friday, calling Thompson a "bright light" who was "committed to public service."

"Our entire state mourns the horrible loss of Da'Cara Thompson, who was taken from us by an act of senseless violence," the governor said in the statement, vowing to use "every tool at our disposal" to hold those responsible for her death accountable.

The 19-year-old's cause of death has yet to be determined, though police said it may be ruled a homicide based on the evidence collected.

As the investigation remains active, police said detectives are working to determine whether Hernandez-Mendez and Thompson knew each other before the day she went missing.

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Hernandez-Mendez is being held without bond by the Maryland Department of Corrections.

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