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Wisconsin Teen Sentenced to 10 Years for Fatal Accidental Shooting of 10-Year-Old Cousin

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A 19-year-old Wisconsin man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for the fatal shooting of his young cousin, after firing a gun recklessly inside a multi-generational family home. The tragedy has sparked renewed calls for responsible firearm handling and stronger safety awareness in urban communities.

Javier Rodriguez received his sentence on Thursday after pleading guilty in June to second-degree reckless homicide in the death of 10-year-old Isdennely Liz Ortiz. The incident occurred on May 31, 2024, inside a three-story residence in Milwaukee. Rodriguez, who was 18 at the time, was reportedly handling a firearm on the upper floor when it discharged, with the bullet travelling through the floor and ceiling and striking the child as she slept beside her infant brother in her mother's bed.

The girl, affectionately known as "Issey" to her family, had celebrated her 10th birthday just weeks earlier. Despite emergency efforts, she died before paramedics could reach her.

Court documents detail Rodriguez's immediate panic, running downstairs to the child's mother and repeating, "It's my fault. I'm sorry. Please forgive me." Surveillance footage and witness statements confirmed Rodriguez's presence with a firearm shortly before the shooting. He fled the home but was identified through home surveillance and arrested several days later.

A prior incident involving Rodriguez discharging a weapon inside the same home just a month before was also revealed in court, during which a bullet hole was left in the ceiling. Authorities recovered multiple firearms from the property, including three loaded pistols, a drum magazine, and several boxes of ammunition.

Rodriguez will also serve eight years under supervised release following his prison term. The judge additionally barred him from owning or possessing firearms for life.

Local figures reacted strongly to the outcome. Marty Calderon, a community activist with Milwaukee's Promise Keepers, said, "Now we have a family whose 10-year-old daughter is not here... How much more do we have to keep telling people—leave guns alone."

Milwaukee Alderwoman JoCasta Zamarripa called the incident “utterly unacceptable,” highlighting the broader issue of youth exposure to gun violence. According to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 12 percent of homicide victims in the city this year have been between the ages of 10 and 17.

Community group Safe and Sound plans to hold a gun violence awareness event later this summer. Representative Teneen Rucker said, “We have to give people the knowledge of how to safely handle a gun... This can’t keep happening.”

Rodriguez faced a possible 25-year sentence but accepted a plea deal. His sentencing, though delivering legal closure, leaves a lasting void in a family and community already burdened by preventable loss.