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Okla. native killed working in Mexico

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ENID, Okla. — An Oklahoma man who was selling time shares in Mexico is robbed and killed right outside a vacation resort last month. Now his family has two heartbreaking dilemmas; finding out who killed 31-year-old Jacob Semler near Puerto Vallarta and getting his cremated remains home.

Jeffrey Semler, Jacob's uncle who lives in Enid, says his nephew went to the store after work on Feb. 28 and never returned home.

"As soon as we get him back, we're going to have services," Jeffrey says. "He's going to be buried next to my dad, his grandfather."

A private investigator told the family Jacob was killed with a blow to the head and his body was found several miles away from Puerto Vallarta, where he had worked for 10 years.

The investigator believed area police moved Jacob's body after he was discovered to avoid bad publicity for the tourist town.

"I think it's probably true," Jeffrey says. "They don't want any more bad publicity than they have to get. Americans need to stay out of Mexico."

He says Jacob's parents had to pay \$2,500 to gain possession of their son's body from authorities and then cremate him.

They also had to drive 200 miles from Puerto Vallarta to Guadalajara to get passports for Jacob's wife and 4-year-old daughter.

It's an area the U.S. Consulate has told drivers to avoid at night.

"As soon as last week, there's been murders on this road," Jeffrey says. "They're hijacking buses and killing people."

Karen Berkenbile, with Enid Travel Consultants, says travel to Mexico has not been affected by the many reports of violence to tourists.

"There's areas in Oklahoma City I wouldn't go to at night, with or without my husband," she says.

Berkenbile recommends checking the federal government's travel warning map and staying with other tourists.

"When you go to Mexico, I would say do not go where the locals go. Go where the tourist areas are," she says.

The U.S. Department of State says the number of U.S. citizens reported to them as murdered in Mexico increased from 35 in 2007 to 120 in 2011.

Wednesday afternoon, Jeffrey found out Jacob's wife and daughter should have their passports soon to come home to Oklahoma.

But he says they won't have closure until the killer is caught.

[LINK: Click here to see the latest international travel warnings. \(http://www.travel.state.gov/\)](http://www.travel.state.gov/)



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