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## 5-year-old boy killed by mastiffs in Mexico as he tries to deliver letter asking for gifts

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

6:51 p.m. January 5, 2006

MEXICO CITY – A five-year-old boy was killed by his family's two Neapolitan Mastiff dogs on Thursday when he went up to the flat roof of his home – where the dogs lived – to release a balloon bearing a message to Mexico's version of Santa Claus asking for gifts.

The dogs, members of a breed renowned for its fierce protectiveness, were shot to death after they attacked Mexico City police trying to recover the boy's body.

Oscar Ramirez Hernandez, 5, died of dog bites. He was alone in the house with an older brother at the time, Mexico City's Public Safety Department said in a statement.

Like many Mexican children, he had bought a helium-filled balloon and tied a list of gifts he wanted

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to its tail, and went to the roof with the intention of releasing it so it would reach The Three Kings.

Mexico, like many Latin American nations, celebrates Three King's Day by giving children gifts on Jan. 6, the date when the Three Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem to bring gifts to the baby Jesus.

Many countries celebrate both Christmas and the day of The Three Kings, who function as a sort of equivalent of Santa Claus.

After the boy did not return from the roof, his brother went to the roof, saw the boy's body lying between the dogs and called police.



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