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# stretches from New York to Hawai'i

Hawai'i Public Radio | By [Catherine Cruz](#)

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*Gary M. Baranec/AP / FR171747 AP*

Luigi Nicholas Mangione is escorted into Blair County Courthouse, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024, in Hollidaysburg, Pa. (AP Photo/Gary M. Baranec)

It took federal investigators five days to arrest former Hawai'i resident Luigi Mangione, 26, the suspect in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.

[Mangione is accused of fatally shooting Thompson](#) in New York City on Dec. 4.

Former FBI agent Arnold Laanui said that this murder was "unusual." Laanui served in the FBI for 24 years, including eight years on the SWAT team. Most recently, he was the [president of Damien Memorial School](#) in Honolulu.

"The fact that he's a well-educated person is very unusual, and the fact that he comes from a family of some financial means is also kind of unusual. You think that if you have both those elements, if you have high-quality education, and if you have some fiscal means about you, that would help to be a panacea against some of the ills of society. But as we can see in this situation, that's not always the case," Laanui said.

We wondered why, yet again, another high-profile crime has been linked to suspects who recently moved to Hawai'i. Three months ago, a Ka'a'awa man allegedly [tried to assassinate Donald Trump](#). It brought back memories of the case of 25-year-old Mark David Chapman, who, 44 years ago this month, fatally shot John Lennon of The Beatles outside his home.

"It's not unusual for people to run to Hawai'i thinking they're running away from something, running from the mainland, running away from the main 48 out to a place like Hawai'i or Alaska, because they see that as someplace distant and far. So that was the first thing that kind of came to mind," Laanui said.



#### National & International

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Mangione reportedly had back pain from childhood that interfered with his life. He eventually left Hawai'i for the continent to obtain surgery for his back.

"I don't know at this juncture, certainly, the impact that his own back surgery may have had a role, whether it was a variable in him ultimately deciding to kind of pursue this homicide, and what impact it may have had on his psyche and his mental health as well," Laanui said.

He said that the amount of cooperation between law enforcement agencies is "incredible."

"NYPD is one of the largest law enforcement entities in the world, with over 40,000 badge and gun carrying personnel, and they cooperate with folks around the world, and just thinking about just the scale of the investigation, it goes from New York to Hawai'i within a day, and they've got a partner with everybody in between, ultimately arresting this guy in a McDonald's in a neighborhood in Pennsylvania," Laanui told HPR.



*Julia Demaree Nikhinson/AP / AP*

A poster depicting Luigi Mangione hangs outside the New York Hilton Midtown hotel, Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024, in New York. (AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

Laanui said Mangione's arrest is a testament to the power of the partnership between the public and law enforcement in the digital age.

"The digital dragnet is so incredibly powerful. That's the first thing that stands out. As a former law enforcement person myself, looking back at how I did my investigation back in the day to what they're doing now, that's phenomenal," Laanui said.

Mangione has also received a lot of public attention on social media.

"He's been certainly lionized because of the fact that he's targeting a major corporation and also fetishized to some degree, also in social media, to the point where it's now appearing in traditional media as well, where folks are having this conversation," he said.

"It's always important to remember that they are, in fact, tragedies. This gentleman was a husband. He was a father. He was someone's son. It's always important to remember

that victims of crime and their survivors, their families certainly deserve our respect," Laanui added.

*This interview aired on [The Conversation](#) on Dec. 13, 2024. The Conversation airs weekdays at 11 a.m. on HPR-1.*

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## Catherine Cruz

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