



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Stanislaus County
832 12th Street, Suite 300
Modesto, CA 95354
Mailing address: POB 442, Modesto, CA 95353
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 558-4027

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Carol Shipley
Assistant District Attorney

Chief Deputy District Attorneys

Alan Cassidy
Dave Harris
Doug Raynaud

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 12, 2014
Re: Jose Aguilar & Natasha Titsworth
Case #1452677

For More Information Contact:

Carol Shipley, Assistant District Attorney
Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced that Jose Aguilar, age 20, was sentenced today to seven years in state prison after an earlier no contest plea to vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence and admission of an enhancement for fleeing the scene of a fatal wreck. His co-defendant, Natasha Titsworth, age 20 of Delhi, was sentenced today after her earlier no contest plea to a felony accessory charge. She received 60 days in jail and three years of formal probation.

On November 3, 2012, shortly before 3:30 a.m., Officer Khamo of the Turlock Police Department was in a marked patrol car when he spotlighted an area behind closed businesses because saw people and cars that did not appear to belong there. Aguilar and the victim, Taylor Vessel, got into one car and drove off with Mr. Aguilar as the driver. Before Officer Khamo, who was following that car, was able to turn on his lights and sirens to attempt to stop the fleeing vehicle, Aguilar's car reached speeds over 100 MPH. Mr. Aguilar then ran a stop sign, hit a tree and subsequently a house at about 50 MPH on Lander Ave. The victim-passenger, Taylor Vessel, was partially ejected and died at the scene. Mr. Aguilar successfully ran away.

Receipts in the car and other information gave investigators leads and led to surveillance video that pointed to a suspect, Mr. Aguilar. Investigators questioned Mr. Aguilar's parents. They both stated that their son emotionally confessed to both of them at different times that he was the driver during the fatal wreck. Within weeks, Mr. Aguilar was apprehended hiding in his mother's closet and arrested.

Ms. Titsworth, a friend of the deceased, lied to Turlock PD in an attempt to conceal the driver's identity by falsely asserting that her car had been stolen before it was involved in the wreck.

Deputy District Attorney Tony Colacito prosecuted the case for the People.

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