



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
David P. Harris

Chief Deputies
Marlisa Ferreira
Jeffrey M. Laugero
Wendell Emerson
Michael D. Houston
Mark Zahner

Bureau of Investigation
Chief Terry L. Seese

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: July 2, 2021
Re: Joshua Timothy Sanders
Vehicular Manslaughter Conviction
and Prison Sentence

For More Information Contact:

John Goold, Public Information Liaison
Phone: (209) 525-6909

Modesto, California- Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Joshua Timothy Sanders, age 32, of Oakdale, was sentenced on June 29, 2021, to state prison after being convicted of felony and misdemeanor crimes arising out of a Riverbank crash that killed one person and injured two others. Deputy District Attorney Kirk Brennan prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On December 20, 2019, Sanders went to a bar on north McHenry Avenue where he got drunk and was eventually kicked out for inappropriate behavior. He got into his truck to leave and hit another vehicle in the parking lot. Sanders then fled the scene at high speed. As he entered the town of Riverbank, Sanders ran a red light and struck another vehicle being driven by 54-year-old Michael Knittel. Knittel's car then hit another car with three occupants. Knittel was killed and two of the occupants in the other car were injured. Sanders had a blood alcohol content of 0.18 % at the time, more than twice the legal limit. He was arrested and charged with gross vehicular manslaughter, driving under the influence causing injury with enhancements for multiple victims, having a blood alcohol content of .15% or greater and misdemeanor hit and run.

On April 26, 2021, Sanders pled no contest before Judge Linda McFadden to all the charges filed against him and admitted the enhancement allegations. During a June 29, 2021, sentencing hearing, members of Knittel's family spoke about the impact his death has had on them and how important he had been in their lives. At the end of the hearing, Judge McFadden sentenced Sanders to serve a total of eight years and eight months in state prison.

###

Office: 832 12th Street, Suite 300 Modesto, CA 95354 Mailing: PO BOX 442 Modesto, CA 95353
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 558-4027 www.stanislaus-da.org



<https://www.facebook.com/StanislausDistrictAttorney/>