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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 14, 2023
Re: Jorge David Cardenas
Convicted

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Jorge David Cardenas, age 33, of Turlock was convicted on August 18, 2023, of felony vehicular manslaughter, violation of Penal Code section 191.5(a), for the killing of Erika Navarro. Cardenas also admitted having a previous conviction for robbery under California's "Three Strikes" Law. Deputy District Attorney Michael Scheid and Deputy District Attorney Ney Montenegro prosecuted the case for the People.

On June 23, 2021, Cardenas and Navarro were at a gathering in Ceres. After having some alcoholic drinks, Cardenas decided to drive home with Navarro. Cardenas sped on his way home to Modesto with Navarro sitting in the front passenger seat.

On June 24, 2021, at approximately 2:00 a.m. Cardenas, driving northbound on Oakdale Rd. at a high rate of speed, crossed the intersection of Scenic Rd. against a red light. After crossing the intersection, Cardenas lost control of his vehicle and collided with a pickup traveling in the opposite direction near Country Court and Oakdale Rd.

Officers of the Modesto Police Department (MPD) found Cardenas unconscious and Navarro not breathing in the front passenger seat. Medical staff pronounced Navarro dead at the scene of the collision. The autopsy revealed Navarro had suffered numerous blunt force injuries to her head and body, all resulting from the collision. The injuries Navarro sustained caused her death.

At the scene, Cardenas showed objective signs of intoxication. During the interview with officers of the MPD, Cardenas admitted to speeding and spinning out of control before the collision. MPD officers conducted a driving under the influence (DUI) investigation and found Cardenas had objective signs of intoxication.

After obtaining a blood sample from Cardenas, the Department of Justice (DOJ) tested the blood sample. The DOJ's test of Cardenas' blood showed he had a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.09% at 4:19 a.m. An expert criminalist for the DOJ calculated Cardenas' BAC would have been 0.13% at the time of the collision.

Upon entry of his plea, the Honorable Robert Westbrook found Jorge David Cardenas guilty and sentenced him to serve 17 years in state prison.

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