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Pablo Cruz Found Guilty of Murder for Vehicular Fatality and Police Chase



ALBANY, NY – District Attorney P. David Soares today announced that PABLO CRUZ, 40, of Schenectady, was found guilty after a jury trial for causing the death of a bicyclist after striking him on Manning Boulevard in the City of Albany and continuing to lead police on a chase into Schenectady County.

CRUZ was found guilty of (1) Count of Murder in the Second Degree, a Class A-I Felony, (1) Count of Vehicular Manslaughter in the Second Degree, a Class D Felony, (1) Count of Leaving the Scene of an Incident Without Reporting as a Felony, a Class D Felony, (1) Count of Unlawfully Fleeing a Police Officer in a Motor Vehicle in the Third Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor, (1) Count of Reckless Endangerment in the First Degree, a Class D Felony, and (1) Count of Reckless Driving, a Misdemeanor, before the Honorable Andrew Ceresia in Albany County Court this afternoon.

At approximately 12:51am on November 24, 2012, CRUZ did, with depraved indifference, recklessly cause the death of Paul Merges, Jr., by striking him with a 1997 Chevrolet pickup truck in the vicinity of Washington Avenue and Manning Boulevard in the City of Albany. CRUZ failed to report this incident to authorities, and instead CRUZ continued to drive in an intoxicated state, with the victim still attached to the truck, through the Town of Colonie and into the County of Schenectady in a reckless manner and at a high rate of speed, driving over the double yellow lines, and at times almost striking marked police units.

By 1:12am CRUZ's vehicle stopped in the vicinity of Curry Road in the Town of Rotterdam and failed to comply with police officer's commands to exit the vehicle. CRUZ did fight with numerous officers who were attempting to take him into custody.

CRUZ remains in custody at the Albany County Correctional Facility until sentencing on September 25, 2014. CRUZ faces 25 years to Life in State Prison at sentencing.

"I want to thank the jury for their service and attention throughout this demanding case," commented DA David Soares. "This case was built with the hard work of many law enforcement agencies that responded to this crash. My deepest appreciation goes to the friends and family of Mr. Merges who had to sit through some of the most difficult courtroom presentations ever in Albany County. This conviction represents one of four cases in our state that have been prosecuted under this theory of law. I applaud Mary Tanner-Richter for her dedication to the prosecution of vehicular crimes in Albany County."

Vehicular Crimes Unit Bureau Chief Mary Tanner-Richter is prosecuting this case.

For more information, please contact Cecilia Walsh.

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