



County of San Bernardino
Office of the District Attorney
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PRESS RELEASE

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Murder Charges Filed Against Habitual Drunk Driver in Hesperia Crash that Killed a Mother and Injured Two Children

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, Calif. – The San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office has filed multiple charges including murder against Jose Luis Vargas (41) of Adelanto. On May 11, 2023 in Hesperia, Defendant Vargas allegedly drove while under the influence of alcohol causing a crash that killed Lisette Villasenor and injuring her two young children ages twelve and six.

Defendant Vargas has multiple prior driving under the influence (DUI) convictions in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. Currently the defendant is on probation for a 2022 Orange County felony DUI conviction.

In 2019 in San Bernardino County, Defendant Vargas was convicted of a felony DUI and was sentenced to 210 days in county jail and three years probation. At the time of conviction, he was put on notice with a Watson Advisement. The Watson Advisement which he acknowledged reads, "If I plead guilty/no contest to a DUI case, (CVC23152, 23153, or 23103 pursuant to 23103.5) then pursuant to CVC 23593, I am hereby advised that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, impairs my ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to human life to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both. If I continue to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, and as a result of that driving, someone is killed, I can be charged with murder."

In 2022, the defendant was convicted in Orange County of another felony DUI, where he was again given and signed his acknowledgment of the Watson Advisement.

On May 15, 2023, the San Bernardino County District Attorney Office has filed the following charges against Jose Luis Vargas;

Count 1 - PC187(a) Murder

Count 2 – VC23153(a) DUI Causing Injury w/Prior Convictions (minor victims)

Count 3 – VC23153(a) DUI Causing Injury w/Prior Convictions (minor victims)

Additional enhancements for Great Bodily Injury (GBI) for one minor victim are alleged on Counts 2&3.

Defendant Vargas pleaded not guilty at arraignment on May 15, at Rancho Cucamonga Superior Courthouse, with bail set at no bail. The next hearing date is set on May 18th, 2023 at Victorville Superior Courthouse department V9.

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