



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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Oroville Driver Pled in 100 MPH Vehicular Manslaughter

An Oroville man charged with vehicular manslaughter for broadsiding another car at 100 mph while under the influence of methamphetamine pleaded no contest to the charge today in Butte County Superior Court.

Joseph Robert Hendrix, 58, of Oroville, pled to one count of felony gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, and admitted a special allegation that he had suffered a prior violent sexual assault “strike” conviction in 2007.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Hendrix was driving his 2018 Dodge Challenger west on Oro Dam Boulevard on the afternoon of February 16, 2022, when he ran into the driver’s side of a 2011 Chevrolet sedan driven by 52-year-old Maria Barajas-Medina, of Oroville. Barajas-Medina was turning east onto Oro Dam Boulevard from 10th Street. An examination of Hendrix’s Challenger’s “black box” showed Hendrix was traveling at 103 mph just before he applied his brakes and then slammed into Barajas-Medina’s driver’s door.

Barajas-Medina was pronounced dead at the scene of the collision.

Ramsey said an examination of Hendrix’s blood taken by a search warrant shortly after the collision showed an extremely high level of methamphetamine. A female passenger in Hendrix’s car and Hendrix survived the collision with minimal injuries.

The passenger previously testified at the preliminary hearing that as Hendrix came off the Oro Dam Boulevard bridge over the Feather River headed west, he exclaimed he believed he saw police behind him and suddenly sped up to avoid them. There were no officers in the area at the time, Ramsey said, noting that Hendrix was then on parole.

Hendrix will next be in court on November 8, 2023, for sentencing. He faces 20 years in state prison. He remains in Butte County Jail without bail.



Joseph Robert Hendrix