



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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Oroville Vehicular Manslaughter 100 MPH Suspect Charged

An Oroville man was in Butte County Superior Court yesterday to be arraigned on vehicular manslaughter charges stemming from a horrific traffic collision on February 16, 2022 in which it was alleged he broadsided another car at 100 mph.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Joseph Robert Hendrix, 57, of Oroville was driving a 2018 Dodge Challenger west on Oro Dam Boulevard at approximately 12:45 p.m. 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 100 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 reportedly told responding officers that as Hendrix came off the Oro Dam Boulevard bridge over the Feather River headed west, he exclaimed that 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 is on parole.

Ramsey said Hendrix was charged with Gross Vehicular Manslaughter while Intoxicated with special allegations that he has suffered two prior violent sexual assault strike convictions, exposing him to a range of 20 years in prison, up to a possibility of life in prison.

Hendrix case was continued to April 6, 2022 for further arraignment and entry of plea. He remains in Butte County Jail without bail after the District Attorney's Office filed a "no bail" motion to keep him in custody given the risk to public safety.

