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Repeat Impaired Driver Sentenced to Fifteen Years to Life in DUI Murder Case

Today, on November 19, 2024, Joey Barron (35, of Fresno) was sentenced to fifteen years to life in state prison for the crime of murder for his role as the driver in a fatal crash on January 2, 2021. The crash claimed the life of 30-year-old Andres Adrian Romero. The sentence was handed down by Judge Jonathan Conklin of the Fresno County Superior Court after he pled to the charge on August 6, 2024.

Barron was driving his vehicle westbound on Highway 168 just after midnight when he approached the Shields Avenue offramp. While driving at a high speed, he lost control of his vehicle, causing it to go up the shoulder embankment and roll. The crash killed Barron's passenger, Romero. Following investigation by the California Highway Patrol, it was determined that Barron had an alcohol concentration of .32%, four times the legal limit for operating a vehicle. In addition to the alcohol, Barron was also found to have marijuana in his system.

Barron was previously convicted of reckless driving involving alcohol in 2012. As a part of that conviction, he was advised that driving under the influence is dangerous to human life, and that if he continued to drive under the influence and as a result of that driving someone was killed, he could be charged with murder. Barron was also arrested for driving under the influence in 2016, but never appeared in court on that matter before the 2021 crash.

The Fresno County District Attorney's Office would like to thank the California Highway Patrol for their investigative work and dedication to this case.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Steven Ueltzen, with assistance from Senior District Attorney Investigator Ronnie Sims. The case was

prosecuted as a part of the Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driver Vertical Prosecution Program. Funding for that program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[CASE 21-228]