

HB 239 - CRIM. NEG. HOMICIDE; FAILURE TO ASSIST

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11.04.2018	Suspect driver arrested after woman killed in Anchorage hit and run	Anchorage Daily News
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07.19.2015	Anchorage teens pleads guilty in hit-and-run death of cyclist	Anchorage Daily News
03.28.2015	Man charged in hit-and-run death of skateboarder in Midtown Anchorage	Anchorage Daily News
04.08.2011	Driver in fatal hit-and-run will serve 18 months in plea deal	Anchorage Daily News

Woman hit and killed by car in Anchorage, first pedestrian death of 2026

Josiah Pike, Georgina Fernandez : 2-3 minutes : 2/17/2026

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - A woman was hit and killed by a car along a Fairview neighborhood street Tuesday morning, according to the [Anchorage Police Department](#).

The death marks the first fatal pedestrian/vehicle collision in 2026.

On Wednesday, police identified the woman as 35-year-old Stephanie Howell.

Officers were dispatched to East 20th Avenue and Ingra Street at 6:01 a.m. Howell was declared dead on the scene. According to APO, the department is still investigating where she was at the time of the collision.

Police said the vehicle involved in the collision was a commercial vehicle. The driver is cooperating with the investigation.

Police told Alaska's News Source there was no further information to share at the time of publication.



The scene of Ingra and E 20th as of the afternoon of 2/17 (KTUU)

Pedestrian struck and killed by SUV near Palmer

Anchorage Daily News : 2-2 minutes



Darrel Williams, as seen in an undated photograph. Williams was hit and killed by an SUV as he walked near Palmer on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025. (Photo provided by Audrey Gwynne)

PALMER - A 39-year-old Kenai man was struck and killed by an SUV while he was walking on a busy road near Palmer on Saturday, [Alaska State Troopers said](#).

Darrel Williams was walking near the Palmer-Wasilla Highway's intersection with Equestrian Street when he was hit by a Toyota SUV moving westbound on the highway, troopers spokesperson Tess Williams said Monday. The SUV's driver stayed in the area and cooperated with troopers, Tess Williams said. No charges or citations have been filed.

People on scene attempted life-saving measures before medics arrived, troopers said. Darrel Williams was taken to Mat-Su Regional Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

The incident was reported just before 5:30 p.m., troopers said. Drivers in the area reported foggy, icy conditions and it would have been dark at the time the collision occurred. It wasn't immediately clear if weather or road conditions played a role.

Darrel Williams is from Kenai but was staying in Mat-Su with family members, his wife

said. A [fundraiser](#) established to provide assistance with funeral costs described him as a military veteran and father of four.

The incident marks the second pedestrian fatality in the past few months in the Palmer area. A [Wasilla woman was hit and killed](#) by a school bus in Palmer in September. Anchorage has seen [15 pedestrian fatalities](#) so far this year.

'He was not invisible': A brother remembered as Anchorage's pedestrian death toll rises to 15

Zaz Hollander : 6-7 minutes *NOVEMBER 18, 2025*



Marie Stackhouse and her brother, Jason Keith "Manu" Felder, in a recent photograph taken in Anchorage. Police say Felder was crossing King Street on foot the night of Nov. 10 when he was struck and killed by a pickup in South Anchorage. (Photo provided by Marie Stackhouse)

Jason Keith "Manu" Felder, the pedestrian hit and killed by a pickup in South Anchorage last week, was born in Utqiagvik and moved to Anchorage decades ago.

This week, his sister described Felder as funny and strong, a skilled carpenter, a father and grandfather who loved vintage cars and struggled with addiction. Her brother chose to be unsheltered, Marie Stackhouse said, but he fought to stay connected despite the scars of early trauma.

“He was very much loved by my family and he was not invisible,” she said. “He shouldn’t have died this way.”

Felder became the 15th person on foot killed by a vehicle in Anchorage so far this year amid what some are calling a pedestrian safety crisis that began in 2024 and has not abated since.

Fifteen pedestrians died in the city last year, a jarring tally that sparked calls for action, [especially on state-owned arterials](#) where most fatal crashes occur. Many proposed safety improvements, including better lighting and lower speed limits, have yet to be implemented. State transportation officials say they are launching safety measures, [including a reduced turn lane in Midtown](#) amid a [pedestrian safety campaign](#) unveiled over the summer.

Driver behavior is an issue: Many of this year’s fatal crashes have involved hit-and-run drivers or people charged with driving under the influence. Drivers, meanwhile, say they find themselves bracing for pedestrians to enter heavy traffic in unpredictable ways. The Anchorage Assembly in 2023 eliminated jaywalking penalties. Earlier this year, a bid to reinstate fines was [postponed indefinitely](#), with some voicing concerns the law was rarely enforced. Safety advocates say the city needs more crosswalks, better lighting and road designs that slow traffic.

Nationally, studies show [rising rates](#) of pedestrian fatalities in many large cities in recent years. One factor: the popularity of big trucks and SUVs that [increase the risk of a pedestrian collision turning fatal](#).

Crossing King Street the night of Nov. 10, Felder was not in a crosswalk when he was struck by a Chevrolet Silverado headed north on King Street, police have said. They also said the driver stayed at the scene and cooperated with officers. No charges have been filed.

Police spokesperson Amanda Brimanis said Tuesday that the case is still under investigation and the department has nothing else to report at this time.

Felder’s was the most recent pedestrian death this year and the second this month. Another man, 65-year-old Carl Schmidt, died in the hospital on Nov. 7 after being struck by a Ford F-150 crossing Minnesota Boulevard near West 32nd Avenue in late October, [police said](#).

Schmidt grew up in New Jersey and moved to Anchorage in 1980, according to his [obituary](#). He worked in food service, engaged in interests including painting and making apple dolls, and “loved animals, especially his beloved dogs, Lucky and Rocky,” the obituary said. “He had many friends throughout the years, and he will be missed.”

Police have identified the other pedestrians struck and killed by vehicles this year as: Sandra Blix, 30; Francis Katongan, 33; Janice Tom, 49; Wonpen Tawthaisong, 43; Eric Black, 54; Evan Larson Jr., 53; Aaron Cleveland, 33; Gladys Graf, 79; Clara Mattice, 85;

Arthur Stepetin Jr., 63; Donna Nielsen; 34; David Galaktionoff, 48; and Lorraine Williams, 34.



A pedestrian crosses the intersection at Northern Lights Boulevard and Minnesota Drive on Sept. 22. (Bill Roth / ADN)

The number of pedestrian deaths this year has now risen to the same level as last year, when [15 people died](#), which appears to be the most pedestrian deaths in Anchorage over a year's time since at least 1988.

Stackhouse said her brother — like the others — was more than a statistic.

The siblings grew up in Utqiagvik and moved to Anchorage in the early 1990s. In 1995, two armed men pushed their way into the family's Spenard home and demanded money. One was a friend of Felder's, an advantage he used to get inside, according to Daily News reports at the time. Just months from earning a black belt in taekwondo, Felder fought them off but was hit in the head with a gun several times.

A sister of theirs also died by drowning, Stackhouse said.

"These events changed the trajectory of our lives," she said. "I sought counseling (for PTSD) and he refused, choosing to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol. He could never escape the pain he held inside."

She moved back to Barrow in 2008. Her brother stayed in Anchorage, going in and out of jail, she said. He entered treatment in Seattle at one point.

Now the family is waiting for more information from police as to just what happened in the moments leading up to her brother's death and whether it could have been avoided, Stackhouse said. A witness reached out to the family and plans to attend Felder's memorial service in Anchorage on Thursday.

[Polar night](#) came to Utqiagvik on Tuesday afternoon, when the sun set and [won't rise again above the horizon](#) for more than two months.

"In Barrow, we are covered in ice and snow in dark conditions and I can't remember the last time we had a fatality like this," Stackhouse said. "Granted, we have far less people, but we drive with care. In Anchorage it seems like a regular occurrence."

Correction: *This story has been updated to correct that Felder's first name is Jason, not Jacob.*

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Pedestrian fatally struck by pickup in South Anchorage

Anchorage Daily News : 2-2 minutes

Update, Nov. 12: Anchorage police have identified the pedestrian killed Monday night after being struck by a pickup as 46-year-old Jason Felder.

Original story:

A vehicle struck and killed a male pedestrian Monday night in South Anchorage, police said.

The Anchorage Police Department said Tuesday that officers and the Anchorage Fire Department were called to an area near the 9400 block of King Street around 10:20 p.m. for a report of a person hit by a vehicle. The pedestrian was struck by a pickup, a department spokesperson said.

The man was declared dead soon after being taken to a hospital, police said in an [online statement](#).

An initial investigation indicated that the man driving the truck hit the pedestrian as he drove north on King Street, police said. The pedestrian, who has not been identified, was not in a marked or unmarked crosswalk, they said.

The driver remained at the scene and has cooperated with officers, police said. No charges have been filed.

The pedestrian is the 14th to be killed by a vehicle in Anchorage so far this year. Last year, a [record 15 pedestrians](#) died in the city.



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Pedestrian killed in hit-and-run in Midtown, police say

By Anchorage Daily News

Published: October 31, 2025

Update, Nov. 6: The Anchorage Police Department identified the pedestrian who was hit and killed by a vehicle on Oct. 30 as 34-year-old Lorraine Williams.

Original story:

A pedestrian was killed by a suspected intoxicated driver in a hit-and-run collision on Thursday night, the Anchorage Police Department said.

Anchorage police officers and Anchorage Fire Department medics were called to the area of Fireweed Lane and D Street at about 9:35 p.m., police said in an [online statement](#). An SUV driven by someone later identified as 61-year-old John Ivory had collided with a pedestrian, police said.

Online court records indicated that Ivory was charged with driving under the influence, a Class A misdemeanor.

The pedestrian had been trying to cross Fireweed Lane west of Eide Street outside of a crosswalk when they were hit by Ivory's eastbound SUV, according to police. The pedestrian was pronounced dead at the scene after life-saving measures were attempted, police said.

Ivory left the scene but was arrested "a short time later" on suspicion of driving under the influence, according to police.

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Police reviewed traffic camera footage and tracked the SUV's movements before and after striking the female pedestrian, including a stretch where the vehicle was driven the wrong way down Northern Lights Boulevard, according to information from police included in charging documents signed by Assistant District Attorney Ashley D. McGraw.

Traffic camera footage showed the vehicle being parked at the Walmart on A Street, where police located and apprehended the defendant, according to the charging documents. "Clues" during field testing led to officers' suspicions of the driver's impairment, while a breath sample was negative for alcohol, the charges said.

The collision closed the westbound lanes of Fireweed Lane at D Street until about 3:30 a.m. Friday, police said.

Police said Friday morning that the victim will be identified after next-of-kin notification procedures are complete.

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Crime & Courts

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Driver charged with hit-and-run and DUI after pedestrian fatally struck on sidewalk

By Zaz Hollander

Published: September 20, 2025

A pedestrian was struck and killed on a sidewalk early Saturday morning by a driver who fled the scene but was arrested nearby, charges say.

The woman was crossing with a walk signal at Northern Lights Boulevard and Minnesota Drive and had just stepped onto the sidewalk when she was hit, according to an information document filed with charges on Saturday. She has not been officially identified.

The driver, 27-year-old Joshua Vargas, is facing charges including manslaughter, driving under the influence, leaving the scene of an accident and driving on a canceled license. His breath-alcohol level was measured at nearly four times the legal limit for driving less than an hour later, according to a police report summary in the charging document.

Traffic camera footage showed the woman crossing at a slow pace with a visible limp, according to the report summary. She was along Minnesota, just south of the

intersection with Northern Lights, going north when she was crossing the street.

A pickup stopped to let the woman cross at about the time she reached the sidewalk, the summary said. As the pickup slowed, a 2001 Volkswagen Passat driven by Vargas came up behind the truck and swerved onto the sidewalk, hitting the woman, the document said.

The Passat could be seen driving through the crosswalk to the north side of the intersection, still on the sidewalk, before hitting the pickup, the report summary said.

Arriving officers found the woman on the ground at a corner of the intersection and attempted to give medical aid but were unable to revive her, the report said. Medics pronounced her dead at the scene.

Vargas fled to West High School with the pickup driver following him, the document said. Officers arrived and stopped the car on Hillcrest Drive in front of the school. A photo on social media shows the sedan surrounded by patrol cars.

The first report of the crash came at 1:15 a.m. and Vargas was arrested at 1:22 a.m., police spokesperson Tess Hagensieker said in an email.

Officers later spoke with the pickup's driver about the fatal incident. He said his light had turned green but he slowed to let her finish crossing, the report summary said. "He watched as the Volkswagen struck the pedestrian, stating the Volkswagen came out of nowhere."

Officers who contacted Vargas smelled a strong odor of alcohol, noted his speech was so slurred they could barely understand him, and found empty shooter bottles in the car, the summary said. His driver's license was not valid and had been canceled.

A breath-alcohol sample taken just after 2 a.m. measured .318, according to the summary. Alaska’s legal limit for driving is .08.

The woman represents the 11th pedestrian to die after being struck by a vehicle on Anchorage roadways this year.

Vargas was in custody at the Anchorage jail on Saturday morning. He had his first court hearing Saturday afternoon.

Zaz Hollander

Zaz Hollander is a veteran journalist based in the Mat-Su and is currently an ADN local news editor and reporter. She covers breaking news, the Mat-Su region, aviation and general assignments. Contact her at zhollander@adn.com.



Anchorage, Alaska, 99503

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Pedestrian struck and killed in East Anchorage hit-and-run, police say

Anchorage Daily News : 1-2 minutes

A pedestrian was struck by an SUV and killed Friday night in East Anchorage, police said.

Anchorage Police Department officers and Anchorage Fire Department medics responded just after 8 p.m. Friday to reports of a vehicle vs. pedestrian collision in the area of East Northern Lights Boulevard and Boniface Parkway, police said in [an online update](#) Saturday.

The vehicle, which is believed to be a black SUV, apparently struck the person and left the site of the collision, based on a preliminary investigation, police said.

Medics took the pedestrian to a hospital, where the person died from their injuries, police said. The pedestrian's identity will be released after next of kin have been notified, according to the police department.

Police are asking anyone with surveillance footage from the area and anyone with information about the investigation who hasn't already talked with officers to call police dispatch at 311, option 1, or 907-786-8900, option 0. Those who want to remain anonymous can contact Crime Stoppers at anchoragecrimestoppers.com.

'You killed someone': Driver in East Anchorage pedestrian hit-and-run sentenced to 4 months

Zaz Hollander8-10 minutes



Bessie Binkowski listens to testimony during her change of plea hearing in Anchorage Superior Court on Jan. 26. Binkowski was arrested in September on charges of leaving the scene of a fatal pedestrian collision in Anchorage that resulted in the death of Arthur Stepetin Jr. (Bill Roth / ADN)

A hit-and-run driver who killed a pedestrian in East Anchorage last August was sentenced Monday to serve four months in prison under a plea agreement with state prosecutors.

Arthur Stepetin Jr. was one of the [15 pedestrians](#) who died on Anchorage's roadways last year, a toll that ties a record dating back decades. The Anchorage woman who hit Stepetin — 34-year-old Bessie

Binkowski — is one of eight drivers accused of one or more crimes directly related to last year's fatal crashes involving pedestrians.

Traffic camera footage shows a Jeep Grand Cherokee hitting Stepetin and driving away without stopping. Binkowski later told a friend she hit Stepetin while swerving around another car "trying to avoid a drunk guy," according to a criminal complaint filed in the case. She met up with the friend at a Spenard restaurant about 40 minutes after the hit-and-run, taking an Uber to the pre-arranged meetup after dropping her damaged Jeep Grand Cherokee near her home, the complaint states.

Prosecutors say Binkowski tried to hide her damaged Jeep and asked the friend to lie on her behalf, saying she hadn't driven the SUV since July.

Binkowski wasn't arrested until about two weeks after Stepetin was killed on Aug. 29. She was not charged with any crimes directly associated with Stepetin's death.

At the time of the crash, Binkowski was out on bail for a February 2025 operating under the influence arrest in Eagle River, where she was accused of almost hitting an Anchorage police patrol car with an open can of White Claw in the driver-side door, according to a probable cause statement in that case.

Last week, in a deal reached with prosecutors, Binkowski entered guilty pleas to one felony count of leaving the scene of an accident without rendering aid and a misdemeanor count of violating the conditions of release on the February OUI arrest.

The plea agreement called for a two-year sentence with two years "suspended" — no jail time unless Binkowski violated the conditions of her release.



Arthur Stepetin Jr., as photographed on Aug. 22, 2025. Stepetin was crossing East Northern Lights Boulevard in Anchorage on foot when he was fatally struck by a hit-and-run driver. (Photo provided by Anita Pelkey)

During Monday's hearing, Stepetin's family members urged the judge to reject the plea deal that called for no active jail time.

Nearly two-thirds of Anchorage's pedestrian fatalities last year involved people accused of dangerous driving in some form: hit-and-run, driving under the influence, or distracted driving. Several of those cases involve plea agreements. Most criminal cases in the nation and in [Alaska's backlogged court system](#) result in [plea deals](#) rather than going to trial.

Stepetin, 63, was part of a large family with deep roots in Akutan. His niece described him as a loving man who had “made a conscious decision to try to clean up his life and become sober” and walked with a limp due to a fall that caused him to lose his hearing.

Timothy Stepetin, Arthur’s second-oldest son, called his father’s loss “an absolute devastation” and the sentence a slap on the wrist.

“I mean, this person killed our father,” Stepetin said. “How can you get away with no jail time for that? It’s not fair. Our dad deserves justice for his life.”



Monica Pelkey (left) addresses Bessie Binkowski (right) while reading a statement during Binkowski’s sentencing hearing on Monday, Feb. 2, in Anchorage Superior Court. (Zaz Hollander / ADN)

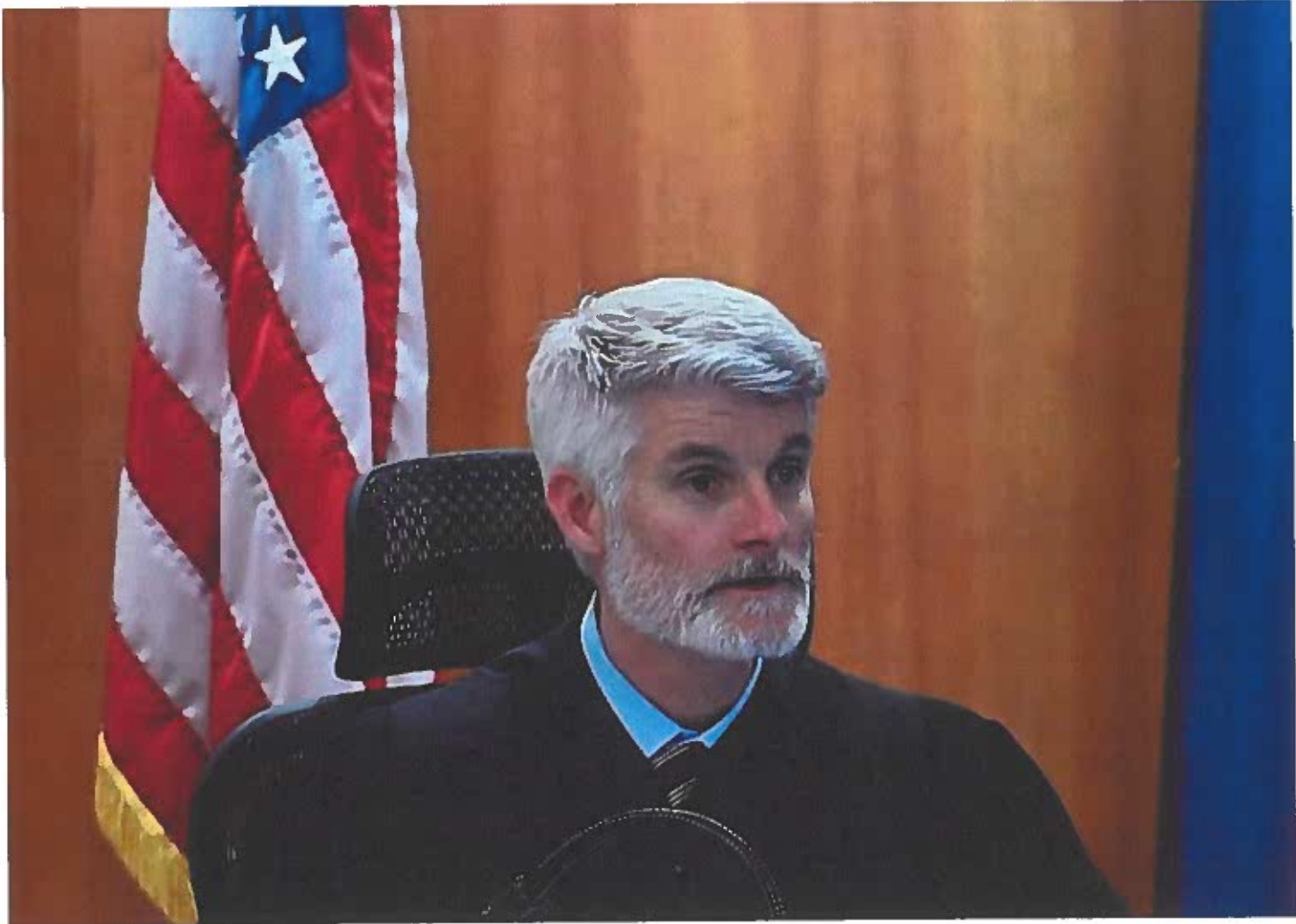
Arthur Stepetin’s niece, Monica Pelkey, read a statement in court Monday on behalf of her mother, Anita Pelkey, Stepetin’s sister.

Pelkey looked at Binkowski as she read from her phone, pausing often to collect herself.

"I want to be very clear: Your actions caused this loss. You killed someone. No one else is responsible for what happened. The choices you made led directly to the death of my uncle ..." Monica Pelkey said, reading the statement. "This loss is permanent. There's no sentence or apology or passage of time that will ever return what has been taken from us. I ask you to take true accountability for what you've done."

Binkowski, who also cried as she spoke, addressed Stepetin's family members directly when the judge asked if she wanted to say anything.

"I don't have words, I can't ... there's nothing I can say to make that OK. There's nothing I can say to ask for forgiveness," she said. "I know that 'I'm sorry' doesn't equate to what you guys deserve, but that's all that I can say is that I'm genuinely sorry that I hurt you guys, that I took that from you, but I am remorseful."



Superior Court Judge Jack McKenna speaks during Bessie Binkowski's change of plea hearing on Jan. 26. (Bill Roth / ADN)

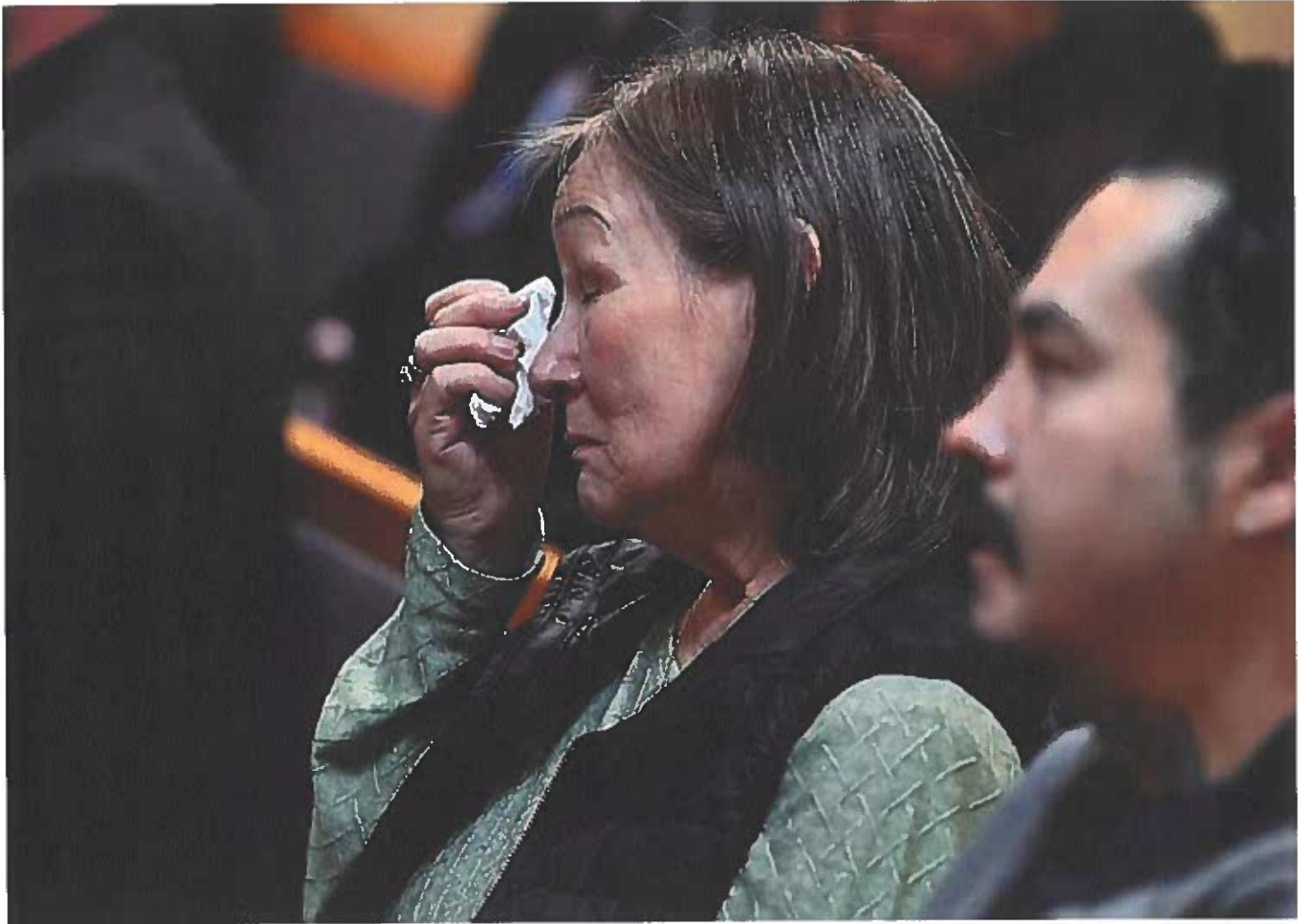
Anchorage Superior Court Judge Jack McKenna rejected the initial agreement, saying Binkowski's prior OUI arrest and her attempt to evade capture by hiding her car and trying to get her friend to lie made a totally suspended sentence inappropriate.

"It's clear here that this was, in my mind at least, among the more serious leaving the scenes of an accident," McKenna said.

Attorneys from both sides met outside the courtroom to agree on new sentencing language, which the judge then approved.

McKenna sentenced Binkowski to two years with 20 months suspended, meaning four months of jail time, minus the roughly 10 days Binkowski spent in jail after her Sept. 13 arrest. She will be on probation for four years.

Based on Binkowski's criminal record, which includes one prior DUI conviction, the maximum sentence she faced on a felony charge of leaving the scene is two years, the judge said.



Anita Pelkey, sister of Arthur Stepetin Jr., wipes tears as she listens to Bessie Binkowski's change of plea hearing in Anchorage Superior Court on Jan. 26. Binkowski was charged with leaving the scene without rendering aid to Stepetin, a pedestrian who died after being hit by a vehicle in Anchorage in late August. (Bill Roth / ADN)

The hearing began with a video of the hit-and-run, which occurred in full daylight on a Friday afternoon. Prosecutor Alexander Hyatt told the judge that the family asked him to show it.

Stepetin was crossing between a marked and unmarked crosswalk when he was [hit by the Jeep](#), according to police reports at the time. Monica Pelkey on Monday said the video footage showed he was near a crosswalk. Anita and Monica Pelkey said they hadn't seen the video showing Stepetin being hit until Monday's hearing.

Kael MacMaster, Binkowski's attorney, said during the hearing that video footage does not indicate his client "went out of her way" to hit anyone but that Stepetin suddenly doubled back as he crossed.

"She did leave, but that's not causing his death," he said, adding that the trauma of the incident may have caused Binkowski to flee. "When very suddenly you have taken someone's life, I don't think it's reasonable to expect somebody to behave as a reasonable person would."

The friend she met at the restaurant just after the hit-and-run did not mention that Binkowski had been drinking or appeared inebriated when interviewed by police, MacMaster said.

The amount of time that lapsed between the fatal crash and Binkowski's arrest ruled out any breath or blood tests police usually administer in the aftermath of fatal crashes.

Hyatt said there were "strong evidentiary concerns" as to why he couldn't bring charges of criminally negligent homicide or manslaughter.

Binkowski was fingerprinted during Monday's hearing. McKenna set a remand date of May 1 and noted Binkowski is eligible to apply to be held on house arrest with an ankle monitor. A plea deal in the OUI case from February requires her to enroll in the Alcohol Safety Action Program.

'Someone needs to be held accountable': Family seeks answers after fatal Anchorage hit-and-run

Jonson Kuhn : 4-5 minutes : 7/24/2025

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - Frustrated by the little information available, Rachel Stauffer has decided to share her story publicly in hopes it will bring her family much-needed answers in her son's death from a hit-and-run crash on Sunday.

"Someone needs to be held accountable. It's not fair. It's not fair to my son who's no longer here," Rachel Stauffer said.

According to Anchorage police, at 7:58 p.m. on Sunday, 31-year-old Christian "CJ" Islas-Stauffer was involved in a collision in the area of Arlington Drive and West Northern Lights Boulevard with a pick-up truck while driving his motorcycle.

[APD's dispatch](#) said Christian was found unresponsive and died after being transported to a nearby hospital.

Police said a white GMC pickup truck left the scene after the crash. The initial investigation suggests Christian's motorcycle struck the truck.

Anchorage police reported Friday that the white truck had been found by authorities on the day of the crash, July 20.

Rachel Stauffer said that Christian had spent Sunday night with family, helping his mother remodel her bathroom. After enjoying a dinner prepared by his grandmother, Christian headed home on his motorcycle, and according to his mother, he was nearly home.



Rachel Stauffer (left) and her mother Phyllis Stauffer share memories of son and grandson Christian Stauffer following his fatal hit-and-run crash on Sunday. The family is still looking for answers after police say the white GMC truck involved fled the scene. (Alaska's News Source)

With the police dispatch coming out on Tuesday, Rachel and her mother, Phyllis Stauffer, said they were frustrated with what they felt was a lack of communication from APO, saying more than 48 hours passed before they were able to make contact with police.

"I have a lot of anger on how we found out," Phyllis Stauffer said speaking about the crash and Christian's death. "If he didn't have his three great friends close to him that reached out on social media to ask for anybody that knew CJ's mom and dad and how to get hold of them, I don't know when we would have found out about this."

In response to our question on why a dispatch wasn't posted until days after the crash, APO said the timeline for releasing information can vary depending on the case.

"Before anything is shared publicly, it must be confirmed, verified and go through the appropriate approval process," APO Deputy Director Chris Barraza said. "This helps protect the integrity of the investigation and ensures that no time-sensitive or critical details are compromised."

APO said in Tuesday's dispatch that no charges have been filed and the investigation is ongoing.

"It's not fair to me. It's not fair to my mother. It's not fair to his siblings, his father, anybody that knew him," Rachel Stauffer said. "I want to have justice for my son. I want this person to be found, and I want them to be held accountable to whatever charges are brought upon this person."

Originally from Juneau, Rachel said Christian had just recently moved to Anchorage to join the family in February. Also new was his passion for riding motorcycles, having only purchased his first bike a few months before the crash.

Described as an avid hiker and a lover of the outdoors, his grandmother Phyllis said he could always be found on the top of a mountain. He leaves behind not only his mother, father and grandmother, but his younger brother and sister, as well, along with the countless friends he made along the way.

"I just want people to remember him for his kindness, remember him for his smile, remember him for, he was always so helpful," Rachel Stauffer said. "He was always willing to help people. He was a social bug. He could talk to anybody, anywhere; he could sell the shirt off of his back. That's just how he was and I want those happy good memories of him to be a part of his celebration of life."

APO is asking anyone with information regarding this crash to contact police at 311. Or you can stay anonymous through Crime Stoppers online.

Editor's note: This story was updated with new information on the whereabouts of the white truck.

Crime & Courts

Police seek hit-and-run pickup driver in Anchorage collision that killed motorcyclist

By Anchorage Daily News

Published: July 22, 2025

Police said Tuesday they are looking for the driver of a pickup truck involved in a fatal collision with a motorcycle in West Anchorage.

Officers responded just before 8 p.m. Sunday to Arlington Drive and West Northern Lights Boulevard for a report of a collision between a white GMC pickup and a motorcycle, police said. The motorcycle's driver was unresponsive when police and medics arrived.

Anchorage Fire Department medics took him to a hospital, where he died of his injuries, police said.

Police identified the motorcyclist as 31-year-old Anchorage resident Christian Islas-Stauffer.

A police spokesperson said the motorcycle struck the pickup. Additional details were not available.

Asked why police didn't release information about the hit-and-run driver for several days, police spokesperson Amanda Brimanis said the "timeline for releasing police information varies by case due to the need for confirmation, verification, and necessary approvals that must be obtained beforehand."

No charges had been filed as of Tuesday afternoon.

Anyone with information is asked to contact APD at 311 (option 1) or 907-786-8900 (option 0).

Anchorage, Alaska, 99503

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Woman dies a week after being struck by a vehicle in Anchorage

Chris Klint: 2-2 minutes : 7/2/2025

Published July 2, 2025 at 2:10 PM AKDT

A woman who was struck by a vehicle last month in South Anchorage has died, according to police.

Police said in [a Tuesday statement](#) that Clara Mattice, 85, was hit by a vehicle just before noon June 19 near DeArmoun and Elmore roads. Anchorage Fire Department medics took her to a local hospital for treatment of life-threatening injuries, and police were informed that she died Saturday.

Police said the driver who struck her remained at the scene and cooperated with officers.

Christopher Barraza, a police spokesperson, said he had no additional information to release Wednesday.

Mattice is the 10th person to be struck and killed by a driver in Anchorage this year, following [two fatal collisions along C Street](#) last month.

Police also said Tuesday that they are seeking a pickup truck in another hit-and-run collision that left a pedestrian severely injured. The crash happened just before 6 p.m. on June 8 at Benson Boulevard and C.

"Initial indications are that an adult male pedestrian was crossing Benson Blvd. in the crosswalk, when he was struck by a Toyota Tundra truck that was turning south from Benson Blvd. onto C St.," police said in the statement.

Road cameras recorded the truck, described by police as a black Toyota Tundra extended-cab pickup made between 2014 and 2021.

Police ask anyone with information about the June 8 collision to contact traffic investigator Mark Fortunato at 907-786-8544 or [by email](#). Tips can also be anonymously submitted online through [Anchorage Crime Stoppers](#).

Anchorage pedestrian killed in hit-and-run collision near Seward Highway

Ava White : 2-2 minutes : 5/23/2025

Published May 23, 2025 at 11:34 AM AKDT

Update, 8:30 a.m. Tuesday:

Anchorage police said they were in contact with the driver Friday afternoon.

Original story:

A pedestrian was killed by a hit-and run driver in Anchorage early Friday at an intersection near the Seward Highway, according to police.

Police responded to Brayton Drive and Mockingbird Drive around 12:30 a.m.

"Initial indications are that two pedestrians were walking south on or along Brayton Drive near Mockingbird Drive when one adult male was struck by a vehicle heading northbound on Brayton," said a [statement](#) from police.

The other pedestrian was uninjured, police said. Police have not yet released the name of the person killed.

The driver of the vehicle left the scene, according to the statement, which didn't provide a description of the vehicle.

Police asked anyone with information about the incident or surveillance footage to call Dispatch at 311.

Last year, 15 pedestrians were struck and killed by vehicles in the Anchorage area. Friday's collision marks the seventh such fatality of 2025.

This is a developing story. Please check back for updates.



Crime & Courts

For Subscribers

Driver charged with hit-and-run and DUI after pedestrian fatally struck on sidewalk

By Zaz Hollander

Published: September 20, 2025

A pedestrian was struck and killed on a sidewalk early Saturday morning by a driver who fled the scene but was arrested nearby, charges say.

The woman was crossing with a walk signal at Northern Lights Boulevard and Minnesota Drive and had just stepped onto the sidewalk when she was hit, according to an information document filed with charges on Saturday. She has not been officially identified.

The driver, 27-year-old Joshua Vargas, is facing charges including manslaughter, driving under the influence, leaving the scene of an accident and driving on a canceled license. His breath-alcohol level was measured at nearly four times the legal limit for driving less than an hour later, according to a police report summary in the charging document.

Traffic camera footage showed the woman crossing at a slow pace with a visible limp, according to the report summary. She was along Minnesota, just south of the intersection with Northern Lights, going north when she was crossing the street.

A pickup stopped to let the woman cross at about the time she reached the sidewalk, the summary said. As the pickup slowed, a 2001 Volkswagen Passat driven by Vargas came up behind the truck and swerved onto the sidewalk, hitting the woman, the document said.

The Passat could be seen driving through the crosswalk to the north side of the intersection, still on the sidewalk, before hitting the pickup, the report summary said.

Arriving officers found the woman on the ground at a corner of the intersection and attempted to give medical aid but were unable to revive her, the report said. Medics pronounced her dead at the scene.

Vargas fled to West High School with the pickup driver following him, the document said. Officers arrived and stopped the car on Hillcrest Drive in front of the school. A photo on social media shows the sedan surrounded by patrol cars.

The first report of the crash came at 1:15 a.m. and Vargas was arrested at 1:22 a.m., police spokesperson Tess Hagensieker said in an email.

Officers later spoke with the pickup's driver about the fatal incident. He said his light had turned green but he slowed to let her finish crossing, the report summary said. "He watched as the Volkswagen struck the pedestrian, stating the Volkswagen came out of nowhere."

Officers who contacted Vargas smelled a strong odor of alcohol, noted his speech was so slurred they could barely understand him, and found empty shooter bottles in the car, the summary said. His driver's license was not valid and had been canceled.

A breath-alcohol sample taken just after 2 a.m. measured .318, according to the summary. Alaska's legal limit for driving is .08.

The woman represents the 11th pedestrian to die after being struck by a vehicle on Anchorage roadways this year.

Vargas was in custody at the Anchorage jail on Saturday morning. He had his first court hearing Saturday afternoon.

Zaz Hollander

Zaz Hollander is a veteran journalist based in the Mat-Su and is currently an ADN local news editor and reporter. She covers breaking news, the Mat-Su region, aviation and general assignments. Contact her at zhollander@adn.com.



Anchorage, Alaska, 99503

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2 pedestrians killed by cars in Anchorage overnight

Chris Klint : 3-4 minutes : 2/19/2025

Published February 19, 2025 at 10:20 AM AKST

Two pedestrians were struck and killed by cars in Anchorage Tuesday night, and one of the drivers now faces murder and DUI charges, police say.

Neither of the victims have yet been named as police notify their families, according to spokesman Christopher Barraza. Roads near both collisions were closed for hours as police investigated them.

These are the city's first pedestrian fatalities of 2025, following [a lethal year](#) on local roads in 2024 with 15 pedestrians struck and killed.

According to police, the first [fatal collision](#) Tuesday happened around 8:45 p.m. in East Tudor Road's westbound lanes near Lake Otis Parkway.

"According to witness statements, the pedestrian was walking on the sidewalk before entering the roadway, where she was struck," Barraza said in an email. "Witnesses indicated she was not in a marked crosswalk at the time of the collision. Whether she was within an unmarked crosswalk is still under investigation."

Anchorage Fire Department medics declared the woman dead at the scene, Barraza said. The juvenile driving the vehicle that struck her remained at the scene and cooperated with police; no arrests have been made in the collision.

About an hour later, Barraza said officers responded to [the second collision](#), reported as a hit-and-run in the northbound lanes of Minnesota Drive near Northern Lights Boulevard. Medics declared the man dead.

Police said the vehicle involved, a Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck, left the scene afterward. A witness gave officers a tip that led them to its alleged driver, 30-year-old JB Matha. Officers found him on 14th Avenue, taking him into custody after a brief foot chase.

"Through investigation, officers determined Matha was driving at a high rate of speed when he struck the pedestrian," Barraza said. "He also appeared to be impaired at the time of the collision. During his arrest, officers found drug paraphernalia and a firearm in his possession."

Barraza said Matha was charged with several crimes including second-degree murder, DUI, misconduct involving weapons and controlled substances, felony refusal to submit to a chemical test, leaving the scene of an accident, failure to render aid, driving with a canceled license and violating conditions of his release.

Matha was being held Wednesday at the Anchorage Correctional Complex.

A state traffic engineer has said there is no one factor [driving the recent increase in pedestrian deaths](#). Anchorage Assembly leaders have laid out a number of suggested changes to improve pedestrian safety, including adding more lights and reducing speeds in certain areas.

A proposal to reintroduce jaywalking fines, which were repealed by the Assembly in 2023, was scrapped earlier this month. Mayor Suzanne LaFrance has said the city has "major infrastructure issues" that her administration is working to address.



Johnny Gaudreau tribute: Who was he and how did he die?

Steve Gardner : 2-3 minutes

Feb. 22, 2026Updated Feb. 23, 2026, 10:10 a.m. ET

The U.S. men's hockey team paid [an emotional tribute to the late Johnny Gaudreau](#) during the gold medal celebration at the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympics.

It was a bittersweet moment for those who fully expected Gaudreau to be a member of Team USA in these Winter Games, if not for his [untimely death on Aug. 29, 2024](#).

Despite his absence, the American team found ways to honor him throughout the tournament, [hanging his jersey in their locker room](#). Gaudreau's family members were also [in attendance](#) for Sunday's gold medal game. And when [Jack Hughes scored the golden goal in overtime](#), the players and coaches made sure Gaudreau's jersey and his children were out on the ice for the team photo.

[Celebrate USA hockey glory with USA TODAY front pages](#)



What happened to Johnny Gaudreau?

Johnny Gaudreau, a seven-time NHL All-Star with the [Calgary Flames](#) and [Columbus Blue](#)

[Jackets](#), is the USA's all-time leading scorer in international play. "Johnny Hockey," as he was known, would likely have been a lock to make the U.S. Olympic team.

But that was before Gaudreau, 31, and his brother Matthew, 29, were killed on Aug. 29 [after being hit by a suspected drunk driver](#) while riding their bikes down a country road in Salem County, New Jersey, near their family hometown.



The driver of the car, 44-year-old Sean M. Higgins, was indicted on two counts of reckless vehicular homicide, two counts of aggravated manslaughter, one count of tampering with physical evidence and one count of leaving the scene of a fatal accident.

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Delta Junction woman used moose hair to cover up pickup damage after fatal pedestrian hit-and-run, charges say

Tess Williams : 3-4 minutes

A Delta Junction woman accused of fatally striking a man with her pickup along the Alaska Highway earlier this year later sprinkled moose hair over the engine to make it look like she'd hit an animal instead, according to an Alaska State Troopers affidavit.

Chelsie Erickson, 32, was arrested last week on charges of criminally negligent homicide, tampering with evidence and leaving the scene of the accident. Erickson's mother was also arrested on a charge of evidence tampering.

Erickson struck [47-year-old John Emerick on Aug. 28](#) while he was walking on the shoulder of the highway near an RV park in Delta Junction, troopers [said](#).

The airbag control module on the truck showed that Erickson was driving 68 mph and did not brake before striking Emerick and only "slowed marginally" after the impact, according to an affidavit written by troopers investigator Al Bell. The document provides no additional details about the collision.

Another driver called for help that night after swerving to avoid large pieces of debris in the road and finding Emerick dead, it said.

After the crash, troopers asked for the public's help locating the vehicle that struck Emerick. A person who knew Erickson reached out to authorities in early October and said she told others she hit a moose the night Emerick died, but no moose was ever located, the affidavit said. Another investigator received a similar tip.

Troopers used data from Erickson's phone to determine she was in the area of the crash when it occurred, according to the affidavit.

During an interview with troopers on Oct. 10, Erickson said she hit a moose but the animal ran into the woods and she didn't report the crash, the affidavit said. She told troopers her truck was towed to a repair shop in Fairbanks, but did not provide details about where and authorities were unable to find any business that worked on Erickson's truck, it said.

Troopers obtained a search warrant on Oct. 17 and found a damaged 2014 Silverado locked in a detached garage in Delta Junction, the affidavit said. Debris found at the scene of the collision matched the color and appearance of the truck, it said.

Portions of the pickup had been removed, and investigators found moose hair on the engine but did not see any hair on the front of the truck, the affidavit said.

A moose mount hanging in the garage next to the vehicle appeared to have "large clumps of loose hairs that appeared to have been pulled or plucked from the mount," Bell wrote. "Based on these observations, it appeared moose hair was retrieved from the mount and then intentionally 'hand sprinkled' over the engine compartment of the truck, representing a fictitious moose accident."

Erickson's mother was also arrested on a felony charge of tampering with evidence, troopers said. It wasn't immediately clear specifically how she was involved in the case.

Both women were taken into custody Oct. 17. and remained at the Fairbanks Correctional Center on Tuesday morning.

Driver who struck and killed pedestrian in crosswalk fined \$100, says APD

by Paxson Woelber: 7-9 minutes

On August 24, 2023, a driver turning onto Piper Street in Anchorage struck and severely injured a pedestrian in a crosswalk. According to [an Anchorage Police Department \(APO\) press release](#), the pedestrian, retired dentist Carlton Higgins, died from his injuries several days later. An investigation by APO found that the driver had failed to yield to Higgins and bore full responsibility for the deadly collision. APO then determined the penalty for the driver: a \$100 fine and four points on his license.

The exceptionally light penalty given to the driver who killed Higgins is standard practice in Anchorage, where the criminal justice system and law enforcement routinely decline to hold drivers responsible for striking and injuring or killing pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Anchorage residents may be surprised to learn that, by default, drivers who break traffic laws and kill pedestrians face significantly lower penalties than those levied for littering, chasing moose, or using studded tires out of season.

"This was an unfortunate event, but not criminally negligent."

According to APO, an investigation found that the driver who killed Higgins pulled out of a parking garage in a Ford F250, stopped at a stop sign and activated his vehicle's turn signal, and waited for traffic to clear to turn left onto Piper Street. Northbound traffic stopped for Higgins, who had entered the crosswalk and who had the right-of-way. But the driver failed to wait for Higgins to exit the crosswalk, instead accelerating into and striking him with his vehicle. According to APD's August 29 press release update, Higgins subsequently died "from injuries he sustained in the collision."

Alaska law provides tools for prosecutors to hold individuals responsible for inadvertent killings, including charges for criminally negligent homicide (a Class B felony) and manslaughter (a Class A felony). But APO told the Landmine that, in order to be criminally charged at all, drivers who break traffic laws and kill pedestrians or other vulnerable road users must be exhibiting "criminal negligence"-a higher degree of negligence than "ordinary negligence." APO described driving under the influence (DUI) or street racing as examples of criminal negligence.

When asked why the driver who killed Higgins did not face criminal charges, despite the finding that the driver had broken the law and was fully responsible for the collision, APO told the Landmine that no "other factors" supported criminal charges. APO stated that the driver was not impaired, was licensed and insured, and was following all rules of the road other than those he broke when he killed Higgins.

There were no other factors present that would provide the probable cause required to support criminal charges. The driver was not impaired, the driver was currently licensed and insured, the driver was following all other rules of the road.

"This was an unfortunate event," APO told the Landmine, "but not criminally negligent."

The driver, therefore, was only cited under [Anchorage Municipal Code 9.20.020\(A\)](#), "Failure to Yield to Pedestrian in Crosswalk." The citation carries a \$100 fine and a penalty of four points on the driver's license.

According to APO, there was no ambiguity about the decision not to pursue criminal charges related to Higgins' death. APO told the Landmine that in cases where it is obvious to APO staff that criminal charges are not warranted, prosecutors do not review reports about traffic fatalities. A prosecutor, APO said, later reviewed the report on Higgins' killing and agreed with APD's decision that no crime had been committed other than the underlying minor traffic infraction.

APO told the Landmine that twenty-five drivers had been cited for Failure to Yield to between January 1 and December 6, 2023:

Twenty-Five drivers have been cited under AMC 9.20.020 (FTY to Pedestrian in Crosswalk) since January 1st. These cases all had similar fact patterns; the only difference is that nobody died. There is no law in Alaska that says if you commit a traffic infraction and cause injury or death, then that is per se criminal negligence. The driver in this case was treated the same as all these other cases.

APD releases the names of victims; withholds names of the drivers who killed them

When drivers break the law and kill pedestrians, the names of the victims are plastered across APO press releases and news articles. However, the names of the drivers who killed them are omitted. APO told the Landmine that, as a matter of policy, the department releases the name of a person who dies due to "criminal means and/or a traffic collision," and releases the names of those charged with crimes.

Because APO does not consider striking and killing a pedestrian legally using a crosswalk to inherently be a crime, the names of drivers who do so are not routinely disclosed.

The Landmine requested the name of the driver who killed Higgins. According to APO, the driver was Russell E. Webb.

HB1112

After decades of decline, the rate of pedestrian deaths in the United States abruptly changed course in 2009 and has risen steadily since. Experts have attributed this increase

Distributed by Representative Chuck Kopp

to a range of factors, including urban planning that prioritizes vehicle speed, the increasing prevalence of [large vehicles that are more likely to kill pedestrians](#), and [a combination of smartphones and automatic transmissions](#) that facilitates distracted driving.

These factors all play out against the backdrop of a legal system that imposes insignificant consequences on drivers who break the law and kill other road users.

Laws that allow drivers to kill pedestrians with few or no consequences are not unique to Alaska. Permissive laws have periodically received media attention and elicited confusion and outrage in the contiguous 48 states. In many cases, calls to update laws have been slow to find success, but the rising rate of pedestrian fatalities has imbued efforts at changing laws with new urgency.

In Washington State, Rep. Paul Harris (R-Vancouver) pursued legislation increasing penalties for drivers who kill vulnerable road users after a driver veered off a road and killed 28-year-old Rachel Casper while she lay in her family's yard. [According to Casper's father](#), Perry Casper, the driver who killed his daughter did not lose his vehicle or license, and received only a slap on the wrist.

Under Harris' bill, HB1112, drivers who kill vulnerable road users—a category that includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and others—can be convicted of a new gross misdemeanor. Penalties include up to a year in jail, a fine of \$5,000 (not to be reduced under \$1,000), and a mandatory loss of driving privileges for 90 days.

Representative Harris' office provided the following statement to the Landmine:

"Rep. Harris introduced this legislation last year because a constituent came to him with a tragic story He lost his daughter in a freak accident. The driver claimed to be swatting at a bug when he ran over this young woman. He simply paid a fine and walked away. It didn't matter that he took a life. Before this law passed, a person could get into a car, swat at a bug, and run over a mailbox. They could pay a \$250 fine and be done. The problem is the same rules applied even if they ended up killing another human being. That's not right. Judges needed to be able to reconsider the facts of these kinds of cases and impose penalties that closer fit the crime."

[HB1112](#) received overwhelming bipartisan support in the Washington legislature. The bill passed initially passed 89-11 in the House, and after several modifications, ultimately passed 89-0 in the Senate and 96-0 (with two excused) in the House. Governor Jay Inslee (D - Washington) signed the bill into law on May 16, 2023.

The bill becomes law in Washington State on January 1, 2025.

Brooke Mulligan, 21, to serve four years in prison for criminally negligent homicide in death of Terry Carlson, Jr

KCAW News : 6-8 minutes : 3/16/2023



Brooke Mulligan (r.) confers with her attorney, Lisa Rosano, during sentencing in Sitka Superior Court on March 14, 2023. Mulligan will serve four years total for criminally negligent homicide and leaving the scene of the accident. Mulligan was remanded into the custody of the Department of Corrections at the conclusion of the hearing, and transported to Hiland Mountain Correctional Center. (KCAW/Woolsey)

A Sitka woman will spend four years in prison for hitting and killing a bicyclist with her car just over two years ago.

In court last August, 21-year old Brooke Mulligan pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide in the death of 20-year old Terry Carlson, Jr. At her sentencing on Tuesday (3-14-23), the court suggested that her actions at the time of the incident were, at best, approaching the more serious charge of manslaughter, and at worst were inhumane.

Please note the content of this story may be inappropriate for some audiences.

The short version of the story is grim: Brooke Mulligan, then 19-years old, possibly coming off a methamphetamine high from the previous evening, drove down Halibut Point Road at 6 a.m. on March 8, 2021, swerved across the centerline and hit a 20-year old bicyclist, Terry Carlson, Jr., head-on with her Jeep. Without stopping or getting out to check on Carlson, she turned around and drove to her father's house where she attempted to conceal incriminating evidence. The collision was witnessed by other motorists, and police located Mulligan about an hour later, and she denied involvement. Carlson's injuries were so traumatic he could not be medevaced to a larger hospital, and he soon died at Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center surrounded by shocked and grieving family.

The long story won't be told, at least not in criminal court, as Mulligan's change of plea last August averted a lengthy trial – where perhaps we would have learned more about Terry Carlson, Jr., beyond the terrible way he died. During Mulligan's sentencing, many of Carlson's family spoke, painting a portrait of him through their grief – none more powerfully than his older brother Tyler Carlson.

"I've had so much anger built up towards you and your family," said Carlson. "I wanted you to suffer. I wanted you to be left alone for dead like you did to Terry. It took a long time for me to get past that feeling. But deep down, I know it's not what Terry would want. It wasn't who he was and would want me to be. All Terry ever wanted was to be loved and accepted. And that built in him giving heart. He always wanted those around him to be happy. He's not vengeful or spiteful. And though every part of me wants to be, I choose not to be and honor him in that way."

In the aftermath of the incident, Mulligan was arrested, arraigned, and jailed on \$500,000 bail. Her mother posted bail six months later, and Mulligan has been under her third-party guardianship since then – which, in a small town, only fueled resentment toward her. By pleading guilty, Mulligan finally admitted to the crime. During sentencing, she offered what apology she could for conduct that many would consider unforgivable.

"I understand that saying sorry doesn't even begin to cut it," she said. "And there's nothing I can say or do to make up for what I've done. I realize that I cannot change your perception of me or the feelings you may have for me. What I did was wrong and unforgivable. But it's important to me that you know my truth. I'm only 21 years old. And at the time of this tragedy, I was only 19. Unfortunately, at the time, I was a chronic drug user and at the peak of my addiction. I was in a very dark place. I had tried to go to rehab before to seek help. But my addiction was too strong and it had consumed me. I can tell you, I'm not proud of the person I was or the decisions I made. I wish that I was able to pull myself out of my addiction before I drastically and permanently altered all of our lives. And especially Terry's life."

Mulligan agreed to a plea deal that will have her serve eight years with five suspended for criminally negligent homicide, five years with four suspended for leaving the scene of an accident and failing to render aid. She'll serve the terms consecutively, for a total of four years, with one day off for every two days of good behavior. After getting out of prison, she'll be on probation for eight years. Assistant District Attorney Amy Fenske explained

that this was the high end of the punishment for the charges, although she acknowledged that many would think it insufficient – possibly herself included. “In Alaska, you just don’t leave people,” she said, referring to Mulligan’s flight from the scene.

Superior Court Judge Jude Pate also wanted to hold Mulligan to account. Had the case gone to trial, he would have had a hard time accepting the argument that she was out of her head when she struck Carlson. He said her immediate attempts to flee and dispose of incriminating evidence – and her refusal to speak with police when they arrived at her father’s house – indicated “a guilty mind.” He said that the type of criminally negligent homicide Mulligan admitted to “was actually closer to manslaughter, which is a more serious type of crime.”

Pate also described the scope of the loss, not just for Carlson’s family, but for everyone.

“And she took from Sitka, by all accounts, a happy, healthy, joyous person – a young man,” Pate said. “He wasn’t perfect. But he was vibrant and best I could tell, he grew up being an important part of the Sitka community.”

Pate said the crime had a “sinister ripple effect,” and had produced not just a distrust of the criminal justice system, but lasting harm to the members of Carlson’s family, who have attended hearing after hearing the last two years, seeking justice for their son, grandson, brother, and cousin.

“This act – this killing – has ripped the fabric of Sitka’s community in the most deep and harmful way,” said Pate. “And it will take years for it to mend, if it ever does.”

Pate denied Mulligan’s request to fly to Anchorage with her mother the following morning to enter the Hiland Mountain Correctional Center. Instead, she was remanded into the custody of a Department of Corrections officer on the spot, handcuffed, and taken to the Sitka jail to await transport.

A civil lawsuit against Mulligan filed by the estate of Terry Carlson, Jr. is pending. Additionally, her father 72-year old Richard Mulligan is awaiting trial in June on [one felony count of tampering with physical evidence](#).

[Previous Chapter](#)

[Next Chapter](#)

CFATALITY: HIT AND RUN VEHICLE ROAD

STRIAN; 4800-BLOCK OF SPENARD

Update - 9/25/24:

On September 23, 2024, Monique Maldonado was taken into custody by APD. She was remanded at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center on her warrant.

APD Case 24-29655

Update - 7/18/24:

With the help of a Crime Stoppers tip, the suspect driver was identified as 25-year-old Monique M. Maldonado. On July 2, 2024, APD Traffic Investigators obtained a felony arrest warrant for Maldonado for the charges of Leaving the Scene of an Accident and Failure to Render Aid.

Monique Maldonado is 5'03" tall, 160 pounds with brown hair and brown eyes. Her current location is unknown; efforts to locate her have been unsuccessful thus far. Anyone with information regarding her whereabouts is asked to call APD Dispatch at 3-1-1 (option #1) or 907-786-8900 (press "O"). You may submit information anonymously online at www.AnchorageCrimeStoppers.com.

Update- 2/2/23:

Both vehicles have been located and the driver of the Dodge Ram has been contacted. The driver/occupants of the Chevy truck are still being sought.

The investigation is ongoing; no charges have been filed.

Update -1/30/23

Fatality investigators have located the Chevy truck; police are still looking to identify the Chevy's occupants. Investigators continue to search for the Ram truck and information regarding its occupants.

Update -1/27/23

Through the course of the investigation, APD Fatality Investigators have determined that two vehicles were in the immediate area when the pedestrian was struck. APD would like to speak to the drivers and/or passengers of those vehicles who were on the 4800-block of Spenard Road on Monday, January 23, 2023, between midnight and 12:20 AM that morning (Sunday night/Monday morning). The area being referred to is between Wisconsin Street and Aviation Avenue on Spenard Road. APD believes the occupants in the two trucks may have information which would be useful to the investigation.

The first vehicle is a gray or black 2007-2013 model year Chevrolet Silverado 4-door with front end damage. The second vehicle is a 2019 or newer model maroon or deep red Ram 1500 4-door with a black tonneau cover and fancy rims; the vehicle sits low to the ground.

If you were in either of those vehicles in that area at the time of the collision, or if you have information of who may have been driving those vehicles and/or where those trucks or people may currently be located, please call APD Dispatch at 3-1-1 (option #1) or 907-786-8900 (press "O") and reference case number 23-2425. To remain anonymous, you may submit a tip on line at www.AnchorageCrimeStoppers.com.

The victim has been identified as 77-year Williams

Update-6:30AM-01/23/23

At 72:20 AM on January 23, 2023, officers assigned to mid shift Patrol and medics with the Anchorage Fire Department responded to 4800-Block of Spenard Road in reference to a vehicle versus pedestrian collision where one pedestrian was struck. The pedestrian was transported to a local hospital and died from their injuries.

The vehicle involved fled the scene. Police are asking anyone who has information regarding the collision, to include surveillance footage, to please call APO Dispatch at 3-7-7 (option #7) or 907-786-8900 (press "O").

The victim's identity will be released once next-of-kin notification procedures have been completed.

Update-5:ISAM-01/23/23

The road has reopened.

Thank you for your patience

Original-12:30AM-01/23/23

At 72:30 AM on January 23, 2023, officers assigned to swing shift Patrol and medics with the Anchorage Fire Department responded to the area of 4800 block of Spenard Road in reference to a hit and run collision with injuries.

Spenard Road is closed in both directions from International to Wisconsin while investigators with the Major Collision Investigation Unit (MCIU) process the scene. Drivers are to use alternate routes.

APO Case: 23-2425



Crime & Courts

Fatal hit-and-run on Glenn Highway subject of proposed plea deal that includes 18-month sentence



Traffic backs up on the southbound frontage road between the south Eagle River and Hiland Road exits on the Glenn Highway on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2021 while Anchorage police conduct an investigation into Chase Bowerson's death. (Loren Holmes / ADN)

An Anchorage Superior Court judge on Friday will consider a plea deal in a criminal case involving a 29-year-old Anchorage man initially charged with murder in the hit-and-run death of a friend.

Chase Bowerson, 26, was hit and killed on the Glenn Highway in January 2021. Brian Tyler McGee was initially charged with second-degree murder in his death. A criminal complaint at the time accused McGee of stranding Bowerson in frigid weather before returning and hitting him with his car.

McGee no longer faces murder charges. Prosecutors dismissed them in early April.

The facts of the case have changed, leading to a plea agreement that proposes an 18-month prison sentence on charges of criminally negligent homicide and leaving the scene of an accident without assisting an injured person.

At the time of Bowerson's death, Anchorage police investigators concluded McGee intentionally swerved to hit him.

But since then, separate crash reconstruction experts hired by state prosecutors and Bowerson's attorney as part of the criminal case came to a different conclusion: McGee did swerve, but away from Bowerson's path.

Police investigators came up with findings that are physically impossible, according to a report filed by state expert David Rochford, an Idaho-based crash reconstructionist and retired Anchorage traffic officer.

"The theory that Bowerson was standing in the road and McGee steered toward him to intentionally run over him violates the Newtonian Laws of Physics," Rochford wrote on behalf of his company, Inland Northwest Traffic Accident Reconstruction LLC.

Kelly and Jeff Trent, Bowerson's parents, are adamantly opposed to the plea deal. They say that based on the way he conducted himself that night, McGee intended to kill their son.

They are planning to show up in court Friday and urge Superior Court Judge Jack McKenna to reject the plea deal. A Facebook [page](#) to support the family during the case has over 600 followers.

Sentencing hearings normally help bring closure to the families of victims.

"In this case, the closure it would bring is not justice at all. It's a slap in the face to victims of violent crimes," Kelly Trent said this week. "We did not want any of this, we did not agree with the plea deal, and we're very opposed to it."

They don't dispute the findings of the experts.

But, they said this week, the plea deal is "unacceptable" given the light sentence and severity of the accusations against McGee, who abandoned their son and then fled after hitting him.

"It wasn't an accident," Kelly Trent said. "This was intentional and it was cruel. The way he left Chase, there's no reasonable explanation for it."

No coat, no car, at 8 below

McGee and Bowerson were 17 when they met and had an on-again-off-again "tumultuous" friendship, according to Bowerson's parents.

The night of the fatal collision on the highway, McGee picked up Bowerson at his home in Chugiak and the men went to bars in Eagle River and Wasilla, according to a criminal complaint filed at the time by Anchorage police Det. Jeff Bell. McGee, driving a Ford Taurus, left Mat-Su for Anchorage but turned back to drop Bowerson at his house, the complaint said.

"Brian McGee stated that Bowerson became belligerent and attacked" him as he drove down the highway, Bell wrote. McGee told police he "baited" his friend out of the car and drove off.

Bowerson was left on the side of the road at 3:45 a.m. in 8 below temperatures wearing jeans and a T-shirt, with no phone or wallet, according to the complaint.

Within minutes, police said, they started getting reports of a man walking along the highway but found no one.

About five hours later, Bowerson's body was located on the shoulder of the southbound lane near the Hiland Road exit, along with McGee's license plate and other car parts, the complaint said.

McGee wrote a threatening instant message to her son when he dropped off Bowerson's belongings in Chugiak that night, Kelly Trent said. Then he headed back down the highway and hit Bowerson, Trent said.

"That the DA accepts this and doesn't want to pursue justice is a disservice to the community," she said this week.

Anchorage assistant district attorney Travis Atkinson said this week that he wouldn't be able to comment on the plea deal until after sentencing was complete due to the ongoing court case.

'Too late'

McGee told a detective he thought he dropped Bowerson off north of Eagle River, according to Rochford's report. McGee said he was driving in the left lane of the southbound Glenn looking toward the northbound lanes to see if Bowerson was still there when he struck him, the report said.

McGee told investigators he initially thought he hit a moose but conceded he may have hit a person and "didn't see him until it was too late," the 2021 complaint said. He didn't stop and drove 14 miles home, it said.

Anchorage Police Department traffic fatality investigators said Bowerson was standing in the left lane and McGee swerved sharply toward his friend and struck him while driving about 65 mph.

But both trial experts found that, while McGee did hit Bowerson, the evidence indicated he did not swerve at him.

Rochford, in his report, said the evidence indicated Bowerson ran across the southbound highway from the right shoulder just before McGee struck him.

McGee swerved sharply to the left and away from Bowerson, before swerving back to the right, Rochford found. He estimated the Ford was traveling under 50 mph at the time.

The expert hired by McGee’s attorney, Regan Williams, also found that Bowerson was killed after he ran into the highway in front of McGee’s car, Williams said this week.

“It was an accident,” he said.

An Anchorage police spokesman on Thursday released a statement after being asked to comment on the experts’ findings.

“Additional information has come to light, providing a clearer understanding of the circumstances surrounding this case,” the statement said. “The Anchorage Police Department will refrain from making further comments until Mr. McGee has formally accepted the plea agreement.”

Zaz Hollander

Zaz Hollander is a veteran journalist based in the Mat-Su and is currently an ADN local news editor and reporter. She covers breaking news, the Mat-Su region, aviation and general assignments. Contact her at zhollander@adn.com.



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Fairbanks Police investigating fatal Aurora Drive hit and run

KTUU News : 2-2 minutes : 2/12/2020

A Fairbanks man reported to be stumbling in the roadway was killed in a hit and run on Aurora Drive early Wednesday morning according to Fairbanks Police.

Just before 12:15 a.m. Wednesday, the Fairbanks Emergency Communications center received a call about a male stumbling in the roadway on Aurora Drive.

Fairbanks Police say officers were dispatched to the reported location, and while en route, another citizen reported seeing a person lying in the roadway. That citizen reportedly stopped to check on the person, an adult male, who was found to be bleeding heavily.

Fairbanks Fire Department paramedics were dispatched and pronounced the man deceased at the scene.

The victim has been identified as 58-year-old Bobby Kubanyi of Fairbanks.

His family has been notified.

FPO's preliminary investigation found that Kubanyi was walking in the southbound lane of Aurora Drive when he was struck by a vehicle.

The driver of the vehicle left the scene and didn't attempt to call for help.

FPO says that investigators received information leading them to a vehicle that may have been involved in the collision, which has since been recovered.

Investigators are now seeking a search warrant for that vehicle.

Anyone with information about the incident, or who may have seen Kubanyi walking on Aurora Drive late Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning is asked to contact FPO Detective Andrew Adams at 907-450-6478.

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Crime & Courts

18-year-old charged in fatal hit-and-run said he fled because he was scared, authorities say

By Michelle Theriault Boots

Published: September 23, 2020

Update, 4:10 p.m. Oct. 1: Anchorage police on Thursday identified the pedestrian who died in a hit-and-run in South Anchorage on Sept. 23 as Carolyn Nick, 26. Next of kin have been notified, police said.

Original story:

A teenager charged in a fatal pedestrian hit-and-run collision in South Anchorage on Wednesday morning told police that a woman jumped in front of the car as he drove, and that he fled the scene because he was "scared," according to court filings in the case.

Cameron D. Mike, 18, has been charged with failure to render aid in the hit-and-run death of the pedestrian near Brayton Drive early Wednesday, police said.

The name of the victim had not been released late Wednesday.

Charging documents in the case describe what happened according to prosecutors: At 1:12 a.m., police dispatchers received a call about an "unconscious woman" in the road near Brayton Drive and Helgelien Loop. Police had earlier said the incident happened at a slightly different location, Brayton Drive and Academy Drive.

Police found a woman dead in the street. She was barefoot and had an injury to her head, according to the charging document. Police also found a bouquet of

roses and a small metal box with a rose clasp scattered around her body, along with chrome vehicle debris and a full license plate, the charges say.

The owner of the license plate told police his son, age 16, had borrowed the family Ford Explorer the previous evening. The 16-year-old wasn't named.

The 16-year-old told police he picked up Mike, who he said is his friend, and the two drove around Anchorage for hours, stopping to switch drivers before midnight, according to the charges. Later, traveling down Brayton Drive, Mike hit an "unknown object," the 16-year-old told investigators.

Police called Mike, who told a different story: that they'd been driving down Brayton Drive when a woman jumped into the road.

"Mike claimed it appeared the female attempted to commit suicide by jumping into the road," the charging document says. "Mike claimed he wanted to stop to check on the female, but (the 16-year-old) convinced him to keep driving."

"Mike said he drove the Explorer to his home because he was scared," the charging document says.

A sample of Mike's breath registered no trace of alcohol, but he admitted to smoking marijuana earlier in the evening, according to the charges. Blood toxicology tests have not yet been returned.

"Depending on the results of that test, and other information gathered during the course of the ongoing investigation, more charges may be forthcoming," police said in the [alert](#).

Police have announced no other charges in the case.

Juneau man struck, killed in road near airport

Michael S. Lockett : 2-2 minutes : 10/5/2020

Published 10:30 pm Monday, October 5, 2020

This story has been updated.

A Juneau man was struck and killed by a truck on Glacier Highway early Tuesday morning, said a Juneau Police Department spokesperson.

Dylan Haisler, 32, was hit by an eastbound vehicle and pronounced dead at the scene by Capital City Fire/Rescue personnel, said JPD Lt. Krag Campbell in a news release.

Trending

"At about 6:43 a.m., the Juneau Police Department received a report of a male being hit by a vehicle in the intersection of Shell Simmons Drive and Glacier Highway," Campbell wrote in the release. "JPD and CCFR responded to assist."

Based on preliminary information, Campbell says, Haisler exited a vehicle still on the roadway and was struck by another vehicle travelling east. The driver of the other vehicle, a 41-year-old man, was uninjured. Police did not identify the driver.

It's too early to speak to Haisler's motivations in exiting the vehicle, the possible involvement of drugs or alcohol or the possibility of forthcoming criminal charges, Campbell said in an email. The investigation is ongoing.

The next of kin has been notified, Campbell said.

Juneau Police Department asks anyone with information about the incident to, call the Juneau Police Department at 907-586-0600. Anonymous tips can also be made through www.juneaucrimeline.com.

- Contact reporter Michael S. Lockett at (757) 621-1197 or mlockett@juneauempire.com.

Trending

2 indicted for the murder of a Juneau man, additional charges

Jay Luzardo: 1-2 minutes : 6/29/2021

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - The two suspects that authorities believe allegedly struck and killed Dylan Haisler at the intersection of Shell Simmons Drive and Glacier Highway in Juneau last October were indicted a week ago, according to the state attorney general's office.

On Thursday, a Juneau grand jury indicted Joseph Schultz and Marisela Velazquez for the murder of Haisler, according to a press release from the office. It said both are charged with two counts of second-degree murder, two counts of first-degree robbery, manslaughter and leaving the scene of an accident.

If convicted, Schultz and Velazquez could face up to 99 years in jail.

The office said arrest warrants were issued for both people after the indictment. Shultz was arraigned in superior court on June 25 and bail was set at \$100,000. The arrest warrant for Velazquez is still pending.

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Anchorage

Police identify victim killed in hit-and-run in front of Brother Francis Shelter

By Jeff Parrott

Published: July 30, 2019

Police in an update Tuesday identified the woman killed in front of the Brother Francis Shelter on Thursday night as 52-year-old Wanda Jackson.

Witnesses to the accident say Jackson was a client of the shelter.

"She got along with everybody," according to Perry Snyder, 55, who said he witnessed the accident. He and others said Jackson was part of their "street family."

The block of Third Avenue where Jackson was struck has been the location of multiple car-vs.-pedestrian collisions in Anchorage, including another fatality earlier this year.

Mikaele Palelei, 43, was arrested Friday and charged with leaving an accident without assisting, a felony. Police say he was driving a Ford F-150 pickup that struck Jackson, then kept driving while witnesses followed and reported him.

Palelei has no previous criminal record and is scheduled to appear in court for a pre-indictment hearing at 2 p.m. Thursday.

Jeff Parrott

 Parrott is a former general assignment reporter for Anchorage Daily News. He graduated with a master's degree in 2019 from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and is a former U.S. Army officer.

Crime & Courts

Suspect driver arrested after woman killed in Anchorage hit-and-run

By Michelle Theriault Boots

Published: November 10, 2018

Anchorage police have arrested a 71-year-old man in a fatal hit-and-run collision that killed a woman walking near the jail Saturday evening.

The woman, whose name has not been released, was found dead in the road at the intersection of East Third Avenue and Orca Street, the Anchorage Police Department said in an alert.

Police arrived on the scene at about 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

Police later released a description of the vehicle they say was involved in the hit-and-run, describing it as a yellow 2002-2005 Ford Explorer with a "business logo" on the front doors and rear window.

On Sunday morning, police announced they had arrested the suspected driver, Ruti Malietufa, 71. He was charged with leaving the scene of an accident and failure to render aid — a felony.

As of Sunday night he was being held at the Anchorage jail. He was expected to be arraigned Monday.

Police had not identified the victim as of Sunday night.

The APD did not respond to questions about the circumstances of the crash, including whether the yellow vehicle Malietufa was driving was a taxi.

Public records show that Malietufa doesn't have a criminal record in Alaska. Records show Malietufa had previously been employed as a driver for a moving company and for a transit service in Hawaii.

Saturday's fatal hit-and-run collision is one of a handful of such incidents in recent months.

In October, 24-year-old Anchorage man Erin Bailey was run over by his roommate, who then fled the scene in East Anchorage. Corey Hopp, 27, is charged in the case.

In June, 23-year-old Cassandra Tinker was killed as she crossed a street in Midtown. Police have not announced any arrest in the case.

Earlier in June, Paul Winter was killed while he was rollerblading on a sidewalk near downtown Anchorage.

Police apprehended and questioned the driver, Adanna Francis, a few blocks away. Police said they would not file potential charges until toxicology test results came back. As of Sunday, no charges had been filed against Francis in the collision.

Michelle Theriault Boots

Crime & Courts

Man charged in East Anchorage hit-and-run death told police he didn't stop to help because he was low on gas

By Michelle Theriault Boots

Published: October 14, 2018

Corey Hoppe was arraigned in the Anchorage Correctional Complex on Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018. Hoppe has been charged with leaving the scene of an injury accident at Northern Lights Boulevard and Baxter Road on Saturday. (Bill Roth / ADN)

UPDATE 10:30 a.m. Monday:

The victim was identified Monday by Anchorage police as 24-year-old Erin J. Bailey.

Original story:

An Anchorage man is in jail for allegedly running over his roommate with an SUV, leaving him crumpled and dying on an East Anchorage street Saturday evening.

Corey Hoppe, 27, told police that he didn't stop to help the man because "he was running low on gas," according to charging documents in the case against him.

The victim died at a hospital of his injuries.

He has not been identified by police.

Hoppe was arraigned on a single felony charge of leaving the scene of an accident without rendering aid to an injured person on Sunday.

Prosecutors warned him that he remains under investigation and more serious charges are possible.

Here's what Anchorage Police Department detectives say happened:

Hoppe and another man were riding together in a Chevrolet Suburban late Saturday afternoon when the passenger either jumped or was pushed out of the vehicle at the intersection of Baxter Road and Northern Lights Boulevard, near the Anchorage Baptist Temple.

Traffic cameras at the intersection captured the Suburban driving over the man from his "chest to his head" before speeding away, according to the criminal complaint against Hoppe.

Police were called to the intersection at 4:58 p.m. and found the dying man.

The video didn't make it clear whether the victim was pushed or jumped out of the SUV, according to the complaint.

At 1:34 a.m. on Sunday police caught up to Hoppe driving a Suburban matching the suspect description southbound on Elmore Road.

In an interview with detectives, Hoppe said the man "slipped, tumbled ... and got run over."

"Hoppe said that after he hit the deceased, he looked in his rearview mirror and observed the deceased on the road," the complaint says. "Hoppe stated he did not stop or call for help because he was low on gas."

At his arraignment on Sunday, Hoppe said he had been unemployed but was anticipating work when the snow began to fall. He said he'd been on food stamps last month.

Prosecutors said it was too early to say whether drugs or alcohol might have been involved in the incident.

Anchorage Magistrate Judge Donna McCready noted his lack of serious criminal history and set bail at \$75,000.

She warned Hoppe not to speak as he shook his head incredulously throughout the arraignment.

A family member of Hoppe who attended the arraignment said Hoppe and the victim had been roommates and friends for years, fixing cars and playing video games together.

Michelle Theriault Boots

Michelle Theriault Boots is a longtime reporter for the Anchorage Daily News. She focuses on stories about the intersection of public policy and Alaskans' lives. Before joining the ADN in 2012, she worked at daily newspapers on the West Coast and earned a master's degree from the University of Oregon.



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Crime & Justice

Anchorage teen pleads guilty in hit-and-run death of cyclist

By Michelle Theriault Boots

Published: May 4, 2015

A 17-year-old Anchorage girl pleaded guilty Monday to criminally negligent homicide and DUI in the death of well-known Anchorage cyclist Jeff Dusenbury last summer.

"It's not going to bring him back," said Dusenbury's wife, Melissa Holder, after the hearing.

But the guilty plea means there will be no trial, bringing her family closer to closure in the legal chapter, she said.

Dusenbury was an avid cyclist who had accumulated a broad circle of friends and colleagues through his biking and work at Food Services of America.

The married father of one was killed July 19 when Alexandra Ellis backed into him while trying to turn around and then left the scene of the accident, police said at the time. When police found her at her home, less than a half-mile from the scene

of the accident, she had a blood alcohol content above the legal limit. Ellis was charged as an adult with manslaughter and other crimes.

In Anchorage Superior Court on Monday, Ellis appeared with her attorney William Ingaldson, who asked that her case be waived into juvenile court. Prosecutor Clint Campion didn't agree, and that matter was not resolved during the hearing.

Ellis pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide, a class B felony, reduced from the manslaughter charge. A felony charge of leaving the scene of an accident without assisting an injured person was dismissed as part of the plea agreement.

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Alexandra Ellis could face a maximum of 10 years on the criminally negligent homicide charge, though attorneys on both sides said in court they had agreed to a sentence of three years with two suspended.

Superior Court Judge Michael Wolverton will make a final sentencing determination in August.

Ellis spoke little in court Monday, answering the judge's questions with "yes" and "no."

Ellis' mother wrapped an arm around her as they walked out of the fifth-floor courtroom to the elevator bank. Ellis is currently under supervision of a third-party custodian.

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"It's nice to see her take responsibility for her actions," said Peter Van Tyne, a Dusenbury family friend who attended the hearing.

A memorial ride for Dusenbury is in the works for this summer.

Holder said she hopes for a productive life for Ellis, who will turn 18 next week.

Maybe, she said, she'll do something like speak to teenagers about the power and responsibility that comes with driving a car.

"A car is a weapon," she said. "She pleaded guilty today to killing someone."

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hit-and-run

Jeff Dusenbury

alexandra ellis

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Alaska News

Anchorage

Michelle Theriault Boots

Michelle Theriault Boots is a longtime reporter for the Anchorage Daily News. She focuses on stories about the intersection of public policy and Alaskans' lives. Before joining the ADN in 2012, she worked at daily newspapers on the West Coast and earned a master's degree from the University of Oregon.



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Crime & Courts

Man charged in hit-and-run death of skateboarder in Midtown Anchorage

By Jerzy Shedlock

Published: March 28, 2015

Charles Carney Jr. told police he left the scene of a fatal hit-and-run incident in Midtown Anchorage on Friday because "he did not know what to do," according to the charges.

Carney, 51, appeared in the Anchorage jail courtroom Saturday on a single charge of leaving an accident without assisting an injured person.

The charge is a felony and carries a sentence of up to 10 years in prison.

Carney said during his initial court appearance that he is an Anchorage School District afternoon playground supervisor. He said he also works at Wal-Mart.

The incident resulted in the death of 23-year-old Desiree Lamont, who was skateboarding near the entrance to the Barnes & Noble parking lot on A Street, the charges say.

Carney is in jail and being held on \$30,000 bail. He requested a bail reduction at Saturday's brief hearing but the weekend judge said that while the request was reasonable, he would not change the amount.

When asked if he has any dependents, Carney said he has a 9-year-old and a 2-year-old before the judge interjected and appointed a public defender.

The charges say Carney hit Lamont with his Ford Explorer while driving out of the parking lot onto A Street. A bouquet of flowers lay by the stop sign near the scene on Saturday afternoon.

Anchorage

Driver in fatal hit-and-run will serve 18 months in plea deal

By Kyle Hopkins

Published: April 8, 2013

The hit-and-run driver who killed a village man on Easter morning two years ago in Anchorage will serve 18 months in prison under a plea agreement approved Monday.

Superior Court Judge Jack Smith accepted the deal after rejecting an earlier proposal that would have allowed 20-year-old Ashley Nichole Bashore to serve just one year for leaving the man to die after striking him with her SUV.

"OMG OMG OMG," Bashore texted on her iPhone shortly after the collision, prosecutors say. Bashore tried to explain the damage to her Hyundai Sante Fe by telling a friend she had "hit a mangy Rottweiler without a collar," according to court filings.

The family of 28-year-old victim Hubert Tunuchuk filled the first two rows of the courtroom gallery. His mother, Godelieve Tunuchuk, listened to the judge's remarks translated quietly into Yup'ik.

"(Hubert) used to hunt food for us, subsistence for us. Now I have nobody to hunt for me and my family," she said later.

Family members said they were disappointed by the sentencing. Godelieve had hoped to see Bashore serve 10 years or more behind bars.

"When it happened, she mentioned she ran over a dog," Peter Tunuchuk, the victim's uncle, told the judge.

Chefornak is a community of about 400 people in Western Alaska. Tunuchuk was in Southcentral Alaska to study power plant operations at a vocational-technical school in Seward.

Court filings say he had been drinking and was walking in the road near a narrow sidewalk curb on the Tudor Road overpass above the Seward Highway when he was hit.

Bashore was 19 at the time.

Paperwork filed by prosecutors in 2011 said phone records revealed Bashore was "likely texting immediately before or at the time of the collision."

Whether Bashore was texting at the moment of the collision was "a contested issue," defense attorney Rex Butler said.

Under the agreement, Bashore admitted to taking her eyes off the road, the attorneys said Monday in court.

"Had she been attentive in her driving and focused on the road, she would have seen him before she struck him," prosecutor Rob Henderson said in an interview with the Daily News.

Bashore pleaded guilty to failing to help someone after an injury accident and criminally negligent homicide. A count of tampering with evidence -- she tried to erase incriminating texts after the collision -- was dismissed.

Bashore had no prior convictions, which lessened the length of her potential sentence, Butler said.

Prosecutors said the first count carried a presumptive sentence of 0 to 2 years in prison. For first-time felons, the count of criminally negligent homicide carried a potential sentence of 1 to 3 years, Henderson said.

Smith rejected the earlier agreement in October, saying one year wasn't enough jail time. He told Tunuchuk's family on Monday that he understood they might not be happy with the 18-month sentence but warned it wouldn't necessarily have increased if the case had gone to trial.

"There's very little more that (the attorneys) can do to change it because of the way the Legislature set up the sentencing guidelines," he said.

If the roles had been reversed and Hubert had struck someone while driving, he wouldn't have sped away, Godelieve wrote in a statement read in court by prosecutors. He would have stopped to help. He would have apologized and taken the victim to the hospital, his mother wrote.

"I want to yell at you, but I won't," Godelieve Tunuchuk wrote. "Instead, I'll pray for you."

Bashore leaned toward the gallery before the hearing began, apologizing to Tunuchuk's family. "I never meant to hurt anybody," she said.

When she gets out of prison, Bashore won't be allowed to own a cell phone capable of sending text messages without a probation officer's permission, according to the agreement.

She turns 21 years old Tuesday. Tunuchuk would have celebrated his 30th birthday on Wednesday.

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By KYLE HOPKINS

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Alaska Dispatch Publishing

Kyle Hopkins

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