

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

Zaz Hollander : 8-10 minutes - FEBRUARY 6, 2026



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.

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Pedestrian critically injured by hit-and-run driver in Northeast Anchorage, police say

Anchorage Daily News : 2-2 minutes

FEBRUARY 4, 2026



The Anchorage Police Department is asking the public for help locating a vehicle suspected to be involved in a hit-and-run on Monday, Feb. 2, 2026 that left a pedestrian with life-threatening injuries. The vehicle is believed to be a black or dark blue 2011-2013 Toyota Corolla with damage to the front bumper and hood. (Photo provided by APD)

A hit-and-run driver left a pedestrian with life-threatening injuries on Monday evening after hitting her as she crossed Mountain View Drive, Anchorage police say.

The Anchorage Police Department [in an update Wednesday](#) released information about the suspected vehicle involved: a black or dark blue 2011-2013 Toyota Corolla with damage to the front bumper and hood.

The department is asking for the public's help in locating the car as the investigation continues.

The pedestrian was hit as she crossed near Bragaw Street and was transported to the hospital, according to a news release APD issued Tuesday. The report of the crash came in just before 6:20 p.m. Monday, police said, and the driver left the scene following the collision.

Anyone with information regarding the collision is asked to contact traffic investigator Mark Fortunato by emailing mark.fortunato@anchorageak.gov or making an anonymous report to [CrimeStoppers](#).



Anchorage hit-and-run leaves woman fighting for life, police looking for driver

Lars Hanson : 2-2 minutes : 2/3/2026

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - A woman suffered what police believe are life-threatening injuries Monday evening after she was struck by a vehicle that then fled the scene in Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood, according to the Anchorage Police Department.

APD officers were dispatched at approximately 6:17 p.m. to the area of Bragaw Street and Mountain View Drive for reports of a vehicle-versus-pedestrian collision.

Police said initial indications show an adult female pedestrian was hit by a vehicle while crossing Mountain View Drive. The driver left the scene immediately after the collision, APD said.

The woman was transported to a local hospital with injuries that are believed to be life-threatening.

The department's Major Collision Investigations Unit responded to process the scene. The investigation remains ongoing, and no charges had been filed as of publication.

The collision comes amid a recent rise in pedestrian deaths in Anchorage. In the 12 months from June 2024 to June 2025, [16 people were killed](#) in pedestrian-versus-vehicle crashes, according to APD. The department reported 14 pedestrian deaths in 2024, the highest number in a decade.

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'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 unhoused, 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 Utqiāġvik 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 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.



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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).

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Crime & Courts - JANUARY 2021

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

CHASE BOWERSON¹⁵ STORY



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.

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"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.

Chase Bowerson on a roofing job in Dutch Harbor in 2020. (Photo provided by Kelly Trent)

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

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"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.

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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.

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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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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 Helglien 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.

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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.”

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“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.

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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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

Jeff 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.



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Crime & Courts *NOVEMBER 18, 2018*

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

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.

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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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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

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Michelle Theriault Boots

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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.

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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.

"(Witnesses) reported that Carney exited his vehicle and walked back to Ms. Lamont as she lay on the ground, then reentered his vehicle and drove away," the charges say.

Police said Carney was stopped a short time later based on witness descriptions of his green SUV. He admitted to hitting Lamont, the charges say.

"He stated he left because he did not know what to do," the charges say.

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The charges do not indicate whether police performed toxicology tests on Carney. A police spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A woman identified as Carney's ex-wife during the hearing declined to comment.

This is a developing story. Check back for updates.

Alaska Dispatch Publishing

Jerzy Shedlock

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