



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
David P. Harris

Chief Deputies
Annette Rees
Douglas K. Raynaud
Marlisa Ferreira
Stephen R. Robinson

Bureau of Investigation
Lt. David Hutchinson
Lt. Froilan Mariscal

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: January 19, 2018
Re: Luiz Miguel Ortega
Murder Verdict

For More Information Contact:

John Goold, Public Information Liaison
Phone: (209) 525-6909

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Luiz Miguel Ortega, age 34, of Modesto, has been convicted of murder and other crimes after a two-week jury trial. Deputy District Attorney Tony Colacito prosecuted the case for the People.

On August 16, 2015, at 1:59 a.m., Ortega was driving his Toyota Camry on Haddon Avenue in Modesto, when he ran a stop-sign at a high rate of speed, hitting another car and killing the driver, 19-year-old Nenar Zaia.

Witnesses saw Ortega run from the accident. Police found him nearby on Miller Avenue where he was taken into custody. Ortega's DNA was found on the driver's side air-bag of his car. Police also found several cans of beer in the car as well as a red and black shoe that matched the other shoe he was wearing when he was arrested. A chemical test showed Ortega's blood level to be .17%/.18%, more than twice the legal limit of .08%. He also tested positive for active methamphetamine and marijuana metabolites.

Before this crash, Ortega had twice been convicted of DUI-related offenses, making him eligible for prosecution on murder charges. After a two-week jury trial, a Stanislaus County Superior Court jury convicted him on Thursday of second-degree murder, gross vehicular manslaughter with intoxication, and hit and run with death, all felonies. He was also convicted of misdemeanor driving on a suspended driver's license. Ortega now faces a maximum possible sentence of 20 years to life in state prison.

Sentencing and victim impact statements will take place in Department 7 at 8:30 a.m. on February 15, 2018.

#

Office: 832 12th Street, Suite 300 Modesto, CA 95354 Mailing: PO BOX 442 Modesto, CA 95353
Telephone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 558-4027 www.stanislaus-da.org



<https://www.facebook.com/StanislausDistrictAttorney/>