



# OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COUNTY OF MADERA

209 W. Yosemite Avenue/Madera, California 93637  
(559)675-7726 / FAX (559)673-0430

Sally O. Moreno, District Attorney

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Thursday February 13, 2020**

**Contact: Sally O. Moreno**  
**District Attorney**  
**(559) 675-7726**

### **SASHA MARIE WATSON FACING STATE PRISON FOR FATAL DUI COLLISION**

On September 7, 2018, at approximately 10:43 a.m., the defendant was driving a vehicle with passengers including her mother, Heidi Lynn Vanzeyl, and two minor children. While driving westbound on SR-145, the defendant drove into the oncoming lane of traffic to pass another vehicle. She attempted to pass a second vehicle while remaining in the oncoming lane of traffic as the center dividing line changed to a double-yellow line. As the defendant crested the top of a hill, she collided with a vehicle being properly driven eastbound by Karrie Lynn Petersen. Ms. Petersen and Ms. Vanzeyl were killed in the crash. The two minor passengers and the defendant were all injured by the crash.

Witnesses and passers-by helped to remove all of the people from the vehicles while the California Highway Patrol and emergency medical responders were on their way. The defendant was treated by ambulance staff and admitted that she had smoked methamphetamine prior to driving that morning. CHP later collected a sample of the defendant's blood. Testing confirmed that she was under the influence of methamphetamine while she was driving.

The defendant was placed under arrest for gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, driving under the influence causing injury, child endangerment, and driving without insurance. Due to the defendant requiring medical care, she was released to the care of the hospital. She was later taken into custody and brought to court on March 12, 2019.

On February 11, 2020, the defendant pled guilty to a felony violation of PC 191.5(a), gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, for the death of Ms. Petersen. She also pled guilty to a felony violation of VC 23153(f), driving under the influence of a controlled substance causing bodily injury, with an enhancement for causing great bodily injury or death pursuant to PC 12022.7(a), for the death of Ms. Vanzeyl. She also pled guilty to two felony violations of VC 23153(f), driving under the influence of a controlled substance causing bodily injury, for the injuries to the two minor passengers. Finally, she pled guilty to two violation of PC 273a(a), child endangerment, for the injuries to the two minor passengers. Her sentence is expected to be 9 years and 8 months in state prison.

The District Attorney's Office would like to thank the California Highway Patrol for their investigation in this case, Victim Services Specialist Yolanda Cardenas, first responders who provided aid in this case, as well as the good Samaritans who helped remove the victims out of the vehicles.