



COUNTY OF FRESNO

Lisa A. Smittcamp
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2017

CRIMINAL CHARGES FILED IN PAIR OF UNRELATED WEEKEND DUI COLLISIONS THAT CAUSED MULTIPLE DEATHS

The Fresno County District Attorney's Office has filed criminal charges against Jose Hernandez and Michael Merritt-Hutchins for a pair of unrelated collisions this past weekend that resulted in three deaths.

Jose Carlos Hernandez (22, of Fresno) has been charged in a Felony Complaint with:

1. Gross Vehicular Manslaughter While Intoxicated [P.C. 191.5(a)];
2. Driving with a 0.08% Blood Alcohol Level Causing Injury [V.C. 23153(b)];
3. Driving Under the Influence Causing Injury [V.C. 23153(a)]; and
4. Leaving the Scene of an Accident Causing Death [V.C. 20001(b)(2)].

Mr. Hernandez is alleged to have struck and killed bicyclist James Raby on Saturday.

Mr. Hernandez is currently in custody at the Fresno County Jail. He faces a potential sentence of up to fifteen (15) years in custody if convicted of the charges. He is scheduled for Arraignment on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in Department 34 of the Fresno County Superior Court.

Michael Robert Merritt-Hutchins (25, of Fresno) has been charged in a Felony Complaint with:

1. Gross Vehicular Manslaughter While Intoxicated [P.C. 191.5(a)];
2. Gross Vehicular Manslaughter While Intoxicated [P.C. 191.5(a)];
3. Driving with a 0.08% Blood Alcohol Level Causing Injury [V.C. 23153(b)]; and
4. Driving Under the Influence Causing Injury [V.C. 23153(a)].

Mr. Merritt-Hutchins is alleged to have struck and killed Fresno Bee carrier Daniel Mendez and his wife Ramona Mendez on Saturday.

Mr. Merritt-Hutchins is currently in custody at the Fresno County Jail. He faces a potential sentence of up to twelve (12) years in custody if convicted of the charges. He is scheduled for

Arraignment on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in Department 30 of the Fresno County Superior Court.

These cases are being prosecuted by the Office's DUI Vertical Prosecution Unit.

The media may e-mail FCDAMedia@co.fresno.ca.us or contact Administrative Assistant Leslie Gillespie at (559)600-4442 with questions.

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