



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Date: March 14, 2024
Case #: 24CF0699

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**Five-time Convicted DUI Driver Charged with Murder
in Hit and Run Death of Pedestrian While Under the Influence of Alcohol**
*Driver was seen drinking alcohol and flipping officers off
at end of police pursuit following deadly collision*

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A five-time convicted DUI driver who was seen drinking alcohol and flipping officers off after hitting and killing a pedestrian in Orange was charged today with murder for killing the man while driving under the influence of alcohol and leading police on a short pursuit.

Jonathan Lopez, 31, of Orange has been charged with one felony count of murder, one felony count of hit and run with permanent injury or death, one felony count of evading while driving recklessly, one felony count of DUI with three or more priors and one felony count of driving with a blood alcohol level of .08% or higher. He also faces one misdemeanor count of driving on a suspended license.

Lopez faces a maximum sentence of 18 years to life in state prison if convicted of all charges.

The victim has not yet been identified.

On March 12, 2024, Lopez was driving in the 500 block of Tustin Avenue in Orange at around 11:15 a.m., when he is accused of hitting a man walking across a street. After striking the man, Lopez is accused of driving away before being located by police a short time later. He then led police on a short high-speed pursuit, running a red light and three stop signs before being arrested.

Lopez has five prior DUI convictions, dating back to 2011. He pleaded guilty in December 2021 to one felony count of driving under the influence of alcohol, one felony count of driving with a blood alcohol level of .08% or higher and one misdemeanor count of driving with a suspended license. He was sentenced to 16 months in county jail.

“An innocent man is dead because someone without a license who has been prohibited from driving because of his extensive DUI history decided to ignore every warning he was ever given that drinking and driving can be deadly and get behind the wheel while intoxicated,” said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “It is clear this individual has absolutely no regard for human life and no respect for the rule of law. Not even jail time could prevent him from putting his own selfish actions over the lives of everyone else on the road that day. This time he’s being charged with a Watson murder because locking him up for decades is going to be the only way from him killing anyone else.”

A criminal complaint sets forth criminal accusations against a defendant who is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Brian Orue of the Homicide Unit is prosecuting this case.

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