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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approved by CJZ
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**Defendant with Two Prior DUI Convictions Found Guilty of All Charges,
Including Murder in the Second Degree for Fatal Collision**
People vs. Ayana Council: Kern County Superior Court Case #BF190550A

(Bakersfield) - District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant jury verdict in a murder case involving drinking under the influence of alcohol. On June 22, 2023, in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Tara Deal, a Kern County jury found Ayana Council, age 28, guilty of all four separate counts including second degree murder, gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, driving under the influence of alcohol causing bodily injury, and driving in the wrong way of a divided highway causing injury or death.

On June 17, 2022 at approximately 8:15 p.m., Council, a Las Vegas resident, was driving while under the influence of alcohol on Highway 58 when she made an unsafe turning movement and lost control of the vehicle. She drove through the center median at full speed into the opposite lanes, striking a vehicle driven by Michelle Rodrigue. Due to the result of the impact, Rodrigue's vehicle rolled several times and landed on its roof. The victim's husband was following behind Rodrigue in his own vehicle and witnessed the collision. After the collision, the victim's husband crawled through the passenger side of the vehicle and attempted to perform CPR, but Rodrigue succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene. The victim, a San Ramon resident, had recently retired from her career as a School Crossing Guard, and was respected and beloved by members of the community. Rodrigue and her husband had recently purchased a new home in Las Vegas to start a new chapter in their lives after their children had grown into adulthood. They attended a celebration of their move the evening before the collision, and they were on their way to their new home when the collision occurred. Their family photos and personal belongings were scattered all over the road, and tragically, Rodrigue never made it to her new home in Las Vegas.

Council showed significant signs of impairment while performing Field Sobriety Tests soon after the collision, and a blood draw revealed her blood alcohol content was 0.221% approximately two and a half hours after the collision. Her blood alcohol content would have been approximately three times the legal

limit at the time of the collision. Council has two previous DUI convictions, with her first DUI conviction occurring on July 17, 2018, in San Mateo County. At the time of that conviction, she was warned about the dangers of drinking and driving, and how it is extremely dangerous to human life to drive while under the influence of alcohol. Only three years later, she was arrested again for driving while under the influence of alcohol in Las Vegas. She was convicted of her second DUI on January 10, 2022, just five months and one week prior to the collision.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Having two prior DUI charges, Council was well aware of the dangers and repercussions of driving while under the influence of alcohol. This conviction will hold Council accountable for the horrible tragedy and ensure that she will not have the chance to take another innocent life again.”

Sentencing is scheduled for July 21st at 8:30 a.m. in Department 7 of the Kern County Superior Court before the Honorable Judge Brian McNamara. Council faces a sentence of 15 years to life in prison.

Ayana Council:

