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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Approved by JAK**  
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**Jury Trial Verdict: DUI Double Murder: Steve Flores Garza, Kern County Superior Court Case #BF172876A**

Bakersfield – Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a significant conviction in a DUI homicide case today. On Wednesday, June 15, 2022, a Kern County jury found the defendant, Steve Flores Garza, guilty of six charges, including two counts of second-degree murder, two counts of gross vehicular manslaughter with intoxication, and two counts related to driving under the influence and causing injury. The jury also found true additional enhancements alleging prior DUI convictions, infliction of great bodily injury, and causing injury or death to multiple victims. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Tara Deal.

On June 26, 2018, at approximately 9:38 p.m., Steve Garza drove a white Chevrolet SUV northbound on SR-43 while under the influence of alcohol. Garza's blood alcohol concentration at the time of the blood draw was 0.118%, however a retrograde analysis was conducted that established Garza's blood alcohol level at the time of the collision as between 0.155 and 0.210%. Even before the collision occurred, witnesses observed Garza's SUV travelling at high speeds and going through at least one stop sign by going into opposite lanes of travel and not stopping.

Garza drove northbound on SR-43 and approached another intersection where SR-43 intersects with Burbank Street. At this intersection, Garza drove 105 mph northbound and swerved in the southbound lane as he approached the intersection. Marcos Ocampo-Carrillo was driving a black Honda northbound on SR-43, and he slowed to make a left turn onto Burbank Street. Emilio Mendoza and Isaiah Sanchez were passengers in the black Honda. Ocampo-Carrillo activated his left turn signal and attempted to turn onto Burbank Street. It was at this moment that Garza, traveling more than 100 miles per hour northbound in the southbound lanes approached the Honda from behind. Garza crashed into the driver's side of Ocampo-Carrillo's Honda while Ocampo-Carrillo was executing the left turn. Witnesses heard a loud acceleration sound from Garza's vehicle immediately before the collision occurred, which was confirmed by collision investigators, as was the fact that Garza never attempted to apply his brakes.

The collision sent Ocampo-Carrillo's vehicle spinning out of control as Mendoza and Sanchez were ejected from the vehicle. Mendoza and Sanchez were pronounced deceased at the scene of the collision. Witnesses attempted to help Ocampo-Carrillo, who was unresponsive in the black Honda and he sustained major injuries as a result of the collision. Witnesses observed Garza in the driver's seat of the white SUV, and Garza admitted to driving the vehicle at the time of the collision.

Garza had previously been convicted of driving while under the influence of alcohol on five separate occasions, and he was on probation for a DUI conviction at the time of this collision. He has the following prior DUI convictions: 7/24/2002 in SM082882A; 2/23/2006 in SM091851A; 8/24/2009 in SM098931A; 4/26/2012 in SF016582A; and 8/31/2017 in LM111596A. It was presented at trial that he was given the *Watson* advisal, which warns of the dangers of driving under the influence, four times: on two occasions it was read by the court, and he read and signed a *Watson* advisal on two separate occasions on 3/29/2012 and 8/31/2017. At the time of the collision, Garza had a suspended license.

Steve Garza is not the first in his family to suffer murder convictions for driving under the influence causing death. On January 17, 2011, Albert Flores Garza -- Steven Flores Garza's brother -- was driving under the influence and ran a stop sign at the intersection of Riverside Street and SR-43. The resulting collision caused the death of and 19-year-old Manuel Cantu as well as Hans Marlette, (a father of 3 young children). Albert Flores Garza was convicted of two counts of second-degree murder and DUI related charges after a Kern County Jury trial in 2012 and sentenced to 31 years to life in prison in Kern County case BF135393A. Albert Flores Garza's conviction was affirmed by the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals in 5DCA case number F065675.

The collision caused by Steve Garza in 2018 occurred only 1 mile away from the collision scene caused by Albert Garza in 2011. Each collision was caused by driving under the influence, and each collision resulted in the deaths of two innocent victims.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction, stating; "Second-degree murder is the most serious charge that can be brought for DUI-related fatalities. When someone who is well aware of the dangers of drunk driving does so anyway and causes death, we will prosecute them for murder. When repeat DUI offenders cause deadly collisions, they prove themselves a public safety risk that cannot be tolerated, and a life sentence is appropriate."

A sentencing date for Steve Garza is set for Wednesday, July 20, 2022, in front of Judge Gloria Cannon. Garza faces a sentence of up to 35 years to life.

Steve Flores Garza



Albert Flores Garza



