



ERIK NASARENKO
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:	John Barrick	Approved:	LOL
Title:	Senior Deputy District Attorney	Date:	Friday, April 23, 2021
Telephone:	(805) 654-3650	Release No.:	21-047
E-mail:	John.Barrick@Ventura.org		

Port Hueneme Man Charged with Murder for Driving Vehicle into Teenage Bicyclists

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Samuel Matthew Rocha (DOB 01/25/93), of Port Hueneme, was charged with one count of murder and four counts of attempted murder, which occurred during the evening of April 19, 2021, in Port Hueneme. The complaint charged five special allegations that Rocha personally used his vehicle as a deadly weapon and two special allegations that he personally inflicted great bodily injury. Rocha was also charged with one count of assault with a deadly weapon and two counts of battery for an incident in Oxnard approximately 10 minutes before the murder and attempted murders.

On April 19, 2021, at approximately 9:38 p.m., the Port Hueneme Police Department was dispatched to an injury hit-and-run traffic collision that had occurred at the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Ventura Road. Witnesses stated several teenage male bicyclists had been struck by a suspect driving a gold-colored Lexus sedan, which fled the scene. Subsequent investigation revealed that Rocha was the driver of that vehicle and that he had intentionally driven his vehicle into the bicyclists, killing a 16-year-old and injuring four additional minors. Approximately 10 minutes earlier in Oxnard, Rocha had battered a male and female at a laundromat and then struck an employee with his vehicle as Rocha was leaving the parking lot of that business.

Rocha appeared in court today for arraignment and plead not guilty to the charges and allegations. The case was continued to June 3, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court for an early disposition conference. Rocha is currently in custody with a no bail setting.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.