

# **\* NEWS RELEASE \***

## **REPEAT DUI OFFENDER FOUND GUILTY BY JURY**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT: Greg Peterson, Deputy District Attorney  
(831) 755-5846**

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Jesus Popoca, age 41, a resident of Salinas, was found guilty by jury of driving under the influence of a drug with one prior DUI conviction. The jury also found true that Mr. Popoca refused to submit to a chemical test after his arrest.

On June 25, 2016, at approximately 4:00 am, a Salinas man was driving home from work heading northbound on Highway 101 when Mr. Popoca abruptly cut in front of him. After following him for approximately one mile and noticing his erratic driving, this Salinas man called 911 and reported this as a possible DUI. Based on his concern for other drivers, instead of exiting the highway and going home, this Salinas man followed Mr. Popoca and turned on his emergency hazard lights and continued to follow him while providing important information to law enforcement. The Salinas man followed Mr. Popoca to Prunedale, where Mr. Popoca veered off the freeway and crashed into some brush, popping his tire.

During the California Highway Patrol's subsequent investigation, Officer Octavio Murillo conducted a Drug Recognition Evaluation on Mr. Popoca, ultimately concluding that he was impaired by two types of drugs. Officer Murillo's expert testimony at trial was instrumental to the People's case.

Judge Thomas Hansen presided over the trial. Sentencing is scheduled for Friday, June 23, 2017. Mr. Popoca faces a maximum of one (1) year in jail.

Highway Patrol Officers Chad Cavender and Jose Medina investigated this case.

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