

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

SALINAS MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED OFFENSE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Salinas resident Pedro Velasco, age 26, was sentenced yesterday to one year and four months in prison for attempting to falsely imprison his pregnant nineteen-year-old girlfriend.

On May 7, 2017, at approximately 7:40 pm, Jane Doe was driving her car accompanied by her boyfriend, Velasco, and their two-year-old son. When Doe and Velasco began to argue, Velasco grabbed the steering wheel, causing Doe's car to swerve violently in and out of traffic on Laurel Drive. Doe pulled over as soon as she could, got out of the car, and immediately tried to remove their son from the backseat. As she was unbuckling the car seat, Velasco punched her in the face twice, resulting in a bloody lip and swollen left eye. At the time, Doe was nineteen years old and several months pregnant with Velasco's child.

Despite her injuries, Doe was able to remove the child and began to walk away from the car. Velasco followed them, took her phone away, and ordered her to return to the car. Once they were back in the car, Doe repeatedly asked Velasco to take her to her mother's house. He refused to do so and instead drove them across Salinas. Doe made numerous attempts to exit the car with the child every time the car slowed down, but Velasco would suddenly accelerate to prevent her escape. Eventually, when he stopped for gas, Doe was able to get to safety.

On May 11, 2017, officers in an unmarked vehicle saw Velasco in a car driven by a known gang member who was on parole. Officer Dunagan recognized Velasco and knew he was also a gang member with a history of being armed and fighting law enforcement, that the two men were not allowed to associate., and that Velasco was wanted for attacking Jane Doe. He surveilled Velasco until additional officers arrived on scene and a high- risk traffic stop was conducted. Both Velasco and his passenger were immediately arrested.

Monterey County Superior Court Judge Robert A. Burlison sentenced Velasco to eight months in prison, which was doubled due to a prior strike conviction.

This case was investigated by Salinas Police Officers Zachary Dunagan and Nicholas Grave.

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