

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

UNIVERSITY SANTA CRUZ STUDENT PLEADS GUILTY FOR COLLISION THAT KILLED TWO PEOPLE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CONTACT: Meredith A. Sillman
(831) 755-5261**

Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Lynnea Leticia Hernandez, age 21 and a resident of Cedar Park, Texas, pled guilty to one count of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence for the death of Nikolas Malliarodakis, one count of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence for the death of Lillian Scott, and two counts of reckless driving causing injury to her passengers Sydney Beyer, Guadalupe Valdez and Morgan Benninger.

On March 21, 2016, Hernandez and her friends who were on spring break, decided to leave Santa Cruz for a daytrip to Big Sur. The seven friends loaded into Hernandez's Lexus SUV and headed down Highway 1 at approximately noon. During their road trip the girls are seen on SNAPCHAT, a popular social media network, dancing raucously, singing and passing around a marijuana pipe. Hernandez at one point is seen looking and singing into the video taking her eyes off the road and not paying attention to driving. At approximately 12:12 p.m., Hernandez crosses into oncoming traffic and hits the vehicle driven by Nikolas Malliarodakis, killing him instantly. Lillian Scott was seated in the middle backseat and also killed instantly. The other passengers in Hernandez's vehicle sustained major injuries as a result of the collision.

Nikolas Malliarodakis, age 24, was a resident of Monterey. On the day of the incident he had driven home from his job in Watsonville to have lunch with his fiancée who had just gotten off the nightshift. He was headed back to work when Hernandez collided into his car. His family was present in court when she entered her guilty plea.

California Highway Patrol Officers R. Gamble and S. Chudziak, and Monterey County District Attorney Investigator Terri Edwards conducted the investigation and arrest in this incident.

Judge Pamela Butler will sentence Hernandez on March 23, 2017 at 8:45 a.m. in Department 3 to the upper term of 6 years in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

This case was presented by members of the District Attorney's Office specialized DUI Vertical Prosecution Unit. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.