

Fatal crash results in jail sentence for Spotsylvania woman

Keith Epps

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A young woman who had been charged with involuntary manslaughter in connection with a fatal crash in Spotsylvania County last year instead pleaded guilty to misdemeanors Thursday.

Casiana De Jesus, 20, of Spotsylvania was convicted in Spotsylvania Circuit Court of reckless driving and assault and battery. As part of an agreement worked out by prosecutor Stephanie Fitzgerald and defense attorney Ghislaine Storr Burks, she was ordered to serve a total of 74 days in jail.

Because the convictions are misdemeanors, De Jesus will have to serve only half of the time, or 37 days—the amount of time Thomas McDermott spent in VCU Medical Center before succumbing to his injuries July 8 last year.

According to the evidence, De Jesus was driving west on Mills Drive on June 2 in a Toyota Tacoma when Spotsylvania Deputy J. Hodges pulled in behind her. The deputy had seen the vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed with improperly displayed tags and was waiting for a safe place to initiate a traffic stop.

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The evidence showed that De Jesus accelerated into the left turn lane at the intersection of Mills Drive and Crossroads Parkway and went through a flashing yellow light. She collided with a Mitsubishi Mirage that was eastbound on Mills Drive carrying McDermott and his 16-year-old daughter, Rebecca.

Hodges, who witnessed the crash, immediately called for help and the McDermotts were taken to Mary Washington Hospital. Thomas McDermott had to be extricated from his vehicle.

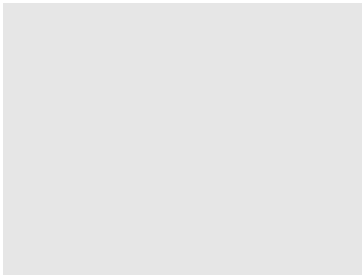
While helping De Jesus get out of her vehicle, Hodges smelled marijuana. De Jesus told the deputy that marijuana had spilled out of a container during the crash and Storr Burks said there was no evidence that De Jesus had any in her system at the time.

Court records state that De Jesus told Hodges she was so focused on the deputy that she didn't notice the yellow flashing arrow. She also told the deputy that she panicked because she knew she'd get in trouble because of the marijuana.

McDermott was transferred to the Richmond hospital after it was determined that his injuries were more extensive than initially thought. In addition to internal bleeding, he suffered rib, leg and multiple pelvic fractures.

He died after doctors were unable to control the internal bleeding.

Note: This story has been updated from a previous version to accurately list Casiana de Jesus' convictions.



De Jesus

Keith Epps: 540/374-5404 kepps@freelancestar.com

By Keith Epps

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