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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Approved by JAK**  
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**Re: Trial Verdict in DUI Murder Case: Cristian Avalos: BF174337A**

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a jury verdict in a significant DUI homicide case today. On August 17, 2021, in a case prosecuted by Supervising Deputy District Attorney Joseph Marcano, a Kern County jury convicted Cristian Avalos of one count of Second Degree Murder for the October 29, 2018 killing of 28 year old Pablo Villarreal Garcia. The jury also found Mr. Avalos guilty of additional charges including gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, driving under the influence causing bodily injury and driving on a suspended license.

During the evening hours of October 28, 2018, Cristian Avalos and his friend drank multiple alcoholic beverages at a club before driving around Bakersfield while intoxicated. Shortly before midnight that evening, Avalos drove his friend's Chevy Camaro on Panama Lane in Bakersfield at speeds reaching 107 mph before running a red light at the State Route 99 northbound freeway offramp, colliding into a vehicle driven by Mr. Villarreal Garcia. Mr. Garcia was killed on impact. A passenger in Mr. Garcia's vehicle was critically injured but survived his injuries. Mr. Garcia and his passenger were travelling home from work when the collision occurred. Avalos' blood alcohol concentration was determined to be .24, three times the legal limit of .08.

The jury heard evidence that Mr. Avalos had suffered a prior DUI conviction in October of 2013 and was advised of an admonishment known as a *Watson* advisement. Pursuant to California law, a court shall advise a person convicted of a DUI of the *Watson* advisement as follows: "You are hereby advised that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, impairs your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to human life to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both. If you continue to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, and as a result of that driving, someone is killed, you can be charged with murder."

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the conviction:  
"Cristian Avalos chose to ignore common sense and explicit warnings from the justice system that drunk driving put lives in danger and could result in murder prosecution. By driving recklessly through the city

at speeds of over 100 miles per hour with a blood alcohol concentration three-times the legal limit, Avalos showed a complete disregard for the lives of everyone on the road. A murder conviction is the best and only response to those whose indifference for the lives of others results in the death of an innocent victim. This conviction and the life sentence that comes with it will ensure that Avalos does not have the chance to take another innocent life.”

Sentencing is scheduled for October 14, 2021 in Department 4 before the Honorable Judge Charles Brehmer. Mr. Avalos faces a life sentence as a result of the conviction.