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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Pleads for Hit-and-Run Death in North Hills, Pursuit Ending in Pacific Palisades

A 55-year-old man has pleaded no contest to charges of fatally crashing into a pedestrian in North Hills, fleeing the scene and then leading police on a pursuit, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Deputy District Attorney Kaveh Faturechi said Mark Christian Johnson of Escondido entered open pleas yesterday to one felony count each of hit-and-run driving resulting in death and fleeing a pursuing peace officer's motor vehicle while driving recklessly and one misdemeanor count of driving under the influence.

An open plea is made to the court when there has been no disposition agreement with prosecutors.

Johnson is expected to surrender on June 14 to begin serving one year in jail followed by a six-month, live-in drug treatment program and three years probation.

On July 30, 2016, the defendant struck José Serrano, 63, with his Toyota Prius near the corner of Sepulveda Boulevard and Parthenia Street, the prosecutor said. Serrano died as a result of his injuries.

Johnson's damaged vehicle was later spotted by police in the San Fernando area and a pursuit began, according to testimony at the preliminary hearing. The defendant was eventually arrested when police forced his car to a stop on Pacific Coast Highway in Pacific Palisades.

Johnson had barbiturates and amphetamines in his system at the time, the prosecutor added.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department, Valley Traffic Division.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.