

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Street Racing Driver Pleads to Manslaughter for Chatsworth Crash

The driver of a vehicle that crashed during an illegal street race, killing two spectators, entered no contest pleas today for causing their deaths, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Deputy District Attorney Moira Curry said Karen Gary Balyan, 43, pleaded to two felony counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence and admitted to fleeing the scene during the commission of the crime.

Additionally, Balyan entered a no contest plea to one misdemeanor count of assault with a deadly weapon.

Co-defendant Israel Valenzuela, 39, also entered a no contest plea today to two felony counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence.

Sentencing for Balyan and Valenzuela in case PA083096 is scheduled for Jan. 4 in Department E of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, San Fernando Branch.

Balyan faces a sentence of 12 years in state prison. Valenzuela faces 180 days in jail and five years formal probation.

A third co-defendant, Henry Gevorgyan, 22, is scheduled to return to the same courtroom for a pretrial hearing on Dec. 24.

On Feb. 26, Balyan drove Gevorgyan's vehicle while racing Valenzuela during an illegal street contest near Plummer Street and Canoga Avenue in Chatsworth, according to court testimony. Within seconds of the beginning of the race, Balyan lost control of the vehicle that slammed into a curb and struck three people, the prosecutor said.

Eric Siguenza, 26, and Wilson Thomas Wong, 50, died upon impact and a third victim was injured but survived, the prosecutor added.

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

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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 seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.