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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Charged with Fatal Pico Rivera Carjacking

A man who reportedly carjacked a van with children inside and killed a 13-year-old girl was charged today, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Jose Elias Aguilar (dob 3/20/94) of Los Angeles faces one count each of murder and corporal injury to a child as well as four counts each of carjacking and kidnapping during the commission of a carjacking.

Case VA153671 includes special circumstance allegations of murder during the commission of a carjacking and of a kidnapping and having previously been convicted in 2017 of first-degree burglary.

Arraignment is scheduled today in Department 5 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Downey Branch.

On July 5, Aguilar allegedly jumped into a van with children, ages 8, 10, 13 and 17, inside while the parents went inside to pick up food at a Pico Rivera restaurant, prosecutors said. Two of the children reportedly managed to jump out of the vehicle before the defendant began driving away.

Aguilar's allegedly erratic driving caused the 8-year-old boy to be ejected from the vehicle, resulting in serious injuries, prosecutors added. The defendant is charged with killing Isabella Cortes who was ejected from the vehicle as it travelled at a high rate of speed, prosecutors said.

The defendant then crashed and is charged with carjacking a second vehicle with a woman and a 2-year-old inside. The driver of that vehicle managed to jump back in the car and fought Aguilar until they crashed.

Aguilar attempted to escape but he was allegedly detained by good Samaritans who held him until police arrived, prosecutors added.

The defendant is being held without bail. If convicted as charged, Aguilar faces a possible maximum sentence of death or life in prison without the possibility of parole. A decision on whether to seek capital punishment will be made at a later date.

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

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.