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PRESS RELEASE

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DUI VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER / HIT-AND-RUN SUSPECT HELD TO ANSWER

A Butte County judge today found sufficient evidence during a preliminary hearing to hold a southern California man to answer for charges of vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, hit and run, and other related charges.

Elpidio ArevaloBotello, 30, of Mojave, was accused in the August 11, 2023 crash at the intersection of Lincoln Boulevard and Ophir Road in Oroville that left two people seriously injured.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said that at approximately 8:07 p.m., ArevaloBotello was driving a Nissan sedan westbound on Ophir Road and ran a red light, colliding with a Jeep Cherokee traveling southbound through the intersection. The collision caused ArevaloBotello's car to spin into a motorcycle that was stopped in the oncoming turn lane on eastbound Ophir Road causing severe injuries to the motorcycle driver, Jeffrey Alan Brooks, 61, of Olivehurst, and his 66-year-old female passenger.

ArevaloBotello fled the scene in his vehicle leaving its bumper and rear window behind in the roadway.

Brooks and his passenger were taken to area hospitals where Brooks succumbed to his injuries and died twelve days later. His passenger remained for several days in the hospital with multiple broken ribs. The driver and passenger in the Jeep sustained moderate injuries.

ArevaloBotello came to the attention of the local California Highway Patrol later that same evening about 11:30 p.m. when he called 911 from the Feather Falls Casino to report his Nissan Sentra had been stolen. When officers met up with ArevaloBotello to take his report, they noted inconsistencies in his story about his "stolen" car and also noted he was intoxicated.

ArevaloBotello was arrested and transported to Butte County Jail where he was given a breath test and eventually admitted he had been driving the car involved in the collision, but couldn't direct officers that night to where he had dumped his car. The next day around noon, officers located ArevaloBotello's badly damaged car hidden in tall grass some nine miles south of the crash near the intersection of Lone Tree and Central House Roads.

Expert forensic evidence presented at today's hearing showed ArevaloBotello's blood alcohol level at the time of the crash to have been at a level twice the legal limit.

An examination of the Nissan's onboard data event "black box" recorder showed ArevaloBotello was traveling 80 miles per hour shortly before going through the red light and colliding with the Jeep and motorcycle.

If convicted of all counts and enhancements, ArevaloBotello faces a possible sentence of more than 20 years in state prison. ArevaloBotello is next due in court on April 24, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. to set his jury trial date. He remains in custody at the jail on \$200,000 bail.



Elpidio ArevaloBotello