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STATEMENT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The widow of Larry Maharrey, as well as Chain | Cohn | Stiles attorney Matthew Clark, would like to share their statements regarding the Kern County District Attorney's Office decision to not file charges against Sgt. Gomez in the fatal crash:

PAULA MAHARREY, WIDOW

"I'm very disappointed by the District Attorney's refusal to prosecute Sgt. Gomez. My family is upset by the fact that the District Attorney and Sgt. Gomez are both employees of the County of Kern. It appears that one county agency is defending another, and it screams of a conflict of interest. We wish that an independent investigating agency such as the state Attorney General's Office would look into this matter. We are also saddened by the fact that the needless loss of my husband's life will do nothing to discourage this kind of reckless driving in the future."

MATTHEW CLARK, ATTORNEY

"I, like my clients, are very disappointed in the Office of the District Attorney's decision not to prosecute Sgt. Gomez. We've had four innocent lives lost in the county in the last four years due to the reckless driving exhibited by some employees of Kern County Sheriff's Department. This is the most offensive kind of loss of life in light of the fact that people are being killed by those very officers who have taken on a duty to protect them.

"In an approximately 250-page report, the CHP Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team concluded that Sgt. Gomez's conduct substantiated a violation of California Penal Code Section 192 (c) (2) – Misdemeanor Vehicular Manslaughter. The District Attorney's decision not to prosecute appears to be in conflict of interest given the fact that the District Attorney and Sgt. Gomez are both employees of the County of Kern.

Without question, Sgt. Gomez conduct in this case was in violation of Kern County Sheriff's Office policy regarding emergency driving in that he failed to pre-clear the lanes of the intersection. His failure to do so killed Larry Maharrey. The failure to prosecute sends the wrong message to law enforcement, suggesting that they are above the law."

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