



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Man Sentenced to 64 Years in Crash that Left 7-year-old Girl Paralyzed**

David Jesse James Alva was sentenced to 64 years in prison Friday for vehicular assault DUI and first-degree assault with extreme indifference in a high speed crash that left a 7-year-old girl paralyzed and seriously injured her mother.

"The actions of Mr. Alva demonstrate the extreme dangers of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol in our communities," said District Attorney Dave Young. "This sentence is a strong message that this will not be tolerated in the justice system."

Chief Deputy District Attorney Patrick Costigan told the court during the sentencing hearing that the criminal justice system had failed Sandra Acuna-Mendoza and her daughter, Jamile Hernandez, because Alva had a history of stealing cars, burglary and vehicular eluding and was on bond in another case when he fled from police in a stolen car driving 80 miles per hour in a 30 mph zone and slammed into Mendoza's car on February 6.

Jamile Hernandez, now 8, was hospitalized for three months and left paralyzed. Acuna-Mendoza, 40, suffered a broken pelvis and ribs, a fractured spine and lacerated liver and spleen.

"Mr. Alva is a public safety hazard," Costigan said. "He is a one-man crime spree." Costigan argued for a maximum sentence because Alva previously had been given numerous attempts at rehabilitation and failed. "He cost this beautiful young girl her legs and changed this family's lives forever," Costigan said.

Alva (DOB 12/02/92) had been smoking methamphetamine and marijuana all day February 6 when he sped through a stop sign at 68<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Pecos Street at 80 miles per hour with his lights off at about 7:30 p.m., plowing into Mendoza's vehicle. She was heading home from a funeral with her daughter in the back seat when they were broadsided by Alva's speeding Nissan Xterra. Alva fled from police because he knew there was a warrant for his arrest.

Adams County District Judge Robert Kiesnowski, Jr., said Alva's conduct was "unconscionable and inexcusable."