



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Man Sentenced to 10 Years in Vehicular Homicide Case**

Elias Bautista-Lopez was sentenced to 10 years in prison Thursday for vehicular homicide-DUI in a 2014 head-on crash in Aurora that left a woman dead.

Bautista-Lopez (DOB 06/02/88) fled to Mexico after the crash and returned to the United States in 2017, where he was arrested on an unrelated charge in Wisconsin. He was extradited back to Colorado to face charges in this case and pleaded guilty to vehicular homicide in August.

Bautista-Lopez was driving the wrong way on East Colfax Avenue near Macon Street in the early morning hours of August 24, 2014 without his headlights on when he crashed head-on into a Hyundai Sonata driven by 32-year-old Carla Gronert, who died of her injuries. Bautista-Lopez had been arrested for DUI twice in the months before the fatal crash and was driving with a revoked license.

Officers who responded to the crash said his speech was slurred and they could smell the odor of alcohol outside the ambulance where he was taken. His blood alcohol content was more than twice the legal limit.

Bautista-Lopez faced a sentence of from 4 to 12 years under the terms of the plea agreement. Chief Deputy District Attorney Patrick Costigan asked for a maximum sentence because of the aggravated circumstances of his crime and failure to take responsibility for what he had done.

"The defendant's decision to get behind the wheel after getting drunk cost Ms. Carla Gronert her life," Costigan said at the sentencing hearing. "He left a bar off of Colfax Avenue, failed to turn on his headlights, drove the wrong way down Colfax, and collided with Ms. Gronert's vehicle head on. Mr. Gronert was in ICU for 24 days before she passed away from the injuries sustained in the crash. Mr. Bautista had a blood alcohol level of .188. At the time of this crash, Mr. Bautista had pending DUI charges out of Arapahoe County from three months prior."

Bautista-Lopez still faces charges in Arapahoe County from his 2014 case there.

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