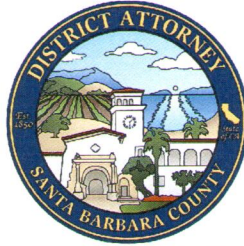


OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

**JOYCE E. DUDLEY**  
District Attorney



DA 04-297

RELEASE NUMBER

April 3, 2015

RELEASE DATE

APPROVED BY *Joyce E. Dudley*, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Kevin Duffy, Senior Deputy District Attorney

CONTACT (805) 346-7520

\*\*\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

**April 3, 2015**

***RE: People v. Benjamin Lee Bettencourt, Case Number 1432097***

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that a jury in Santa Maria convicted Benjamin Lee Bettencourt, age 39, of driving under the influence of alcohol causing injury, driving with a blood alcohol level over 0.08% causing injury, and found true the special allegation of inflicting great bodily injury.

The convictions arose from a major collision that occurred on November 24, 2012. On that date, Bettencourt drove his vehicle into a tree on Highway 246 between Buellton and Solvang. Jennifer Ann Clark was a front seat passenger in Bettencourt's vehicle. The impact caused Ms. Clark to suffer severe head trauma. Ms. Clark died nine days later at Cottage Hospital as a result of her injuries. An investigation conducted by the CHP revealed that Bettencourt's blood alcohol level was over .08% after the crash.

After the verdict was read, the victim's family wept and expressed their appreciation for the prosecuting attorney, Senior Deputy District Attorney Kevin Duffy. The victim's sister stated that even though the guilty verdict couldn't bring her sister back, it was comforting.

Bettencourt was remanded to the custody of the Santa Barbara County Jail today, and he will be sentenced by the Honorable Judge Rogelio Flores on May 4, 2015 in Santa Maria.

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