



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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Date: November 22, 2012
Time: 10:40pm

News Release

Early Morning Thanksgiving Day Tragedy

UCSB student sustains fatal injuries after fall from balcony

Isla Vista –November 22, 2012

At approximately 12:58am on November 22, 2012 Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Deputies and UCSB Police Officers responded to a report of a fall victim in front of a residence in the 6500 block of Cordoba Road in Isla Vista. Upon arrival, deputies and officers located two injured subjects that appeared to have fallen from an apartment balcony. One of the injured subjects, a female, had blunt force trauma to the head and was unresponsive. Deputies immediately provided first aid. The male subject was responsive and complained of pain to his head and back. Once paramedics arrived the victims were rushed to Santa Barbara Cottage hospital for emergency medical treatment. The female was pronounced dead a short time later by hospital staff.

The female decedent was identified as 22 year old Mellissa Portillo, a UCSB student from Los Angeles, California. The decedent's family was notified about the death in person by Los Angeles Police Officers. The male fall victim was identified as 22 year old Michel A.J.H Kuster. Kuster is in stable condition at Cottage Hospital and is not a UCSB or SBCC student.

The initial investigation found that the incident appeared to be accidental, with both subjects falling over a second story railing at the top of the exterior stairs to the apartment complex. Alcohol may have been a factor in the accident, and no foul play is suspected.

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