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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Announces the Indictment of a Police Officer for Vehicular Manslaughter and Misconduct Related to a Fatal Crash Investigation in Howard County

BALTIMORE, MD (April 2, 2025) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the filing of criminal charges in the Circuit Court for Howard County against an officer of the Anne Arundel County Police Department for offenses related to a police-involved fatality on August 10, 2024, in Howard County, Maryland.

After reviewing the evidence, today a grand jury of Howard County residents indicted Officer Alexander Rodriguez, age 30, on one count of Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel – Gross Negligence (Felony), one count of Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel – Criminal Negligence (Misdemeanor), one count of Duty of Driver to Remain at Scene of Accident Resulting in Death (Felony), and five counts of Misconduct in Office (Misdemeanors). Officer Rodriguez has been employed by the Anne Arundel County Police Department since March 2023.

On August 10, 2024, at approximately 4:11 a.m., a motorcycle operated by Mr. Joshua VanderZiel, age 21, of Laurel, Maryland, crashed into the side of a flatbed truck in the 9400 block of Washington Boulevard in Howard County. Witness accounts indicated that the truck was making a left turn from the access drive on Washington Boulevard, into the southbound lanes, when the motorcycle, traveling at a high rate of speed, was approaching northbound on Washington Boulevard. As the truck was making the left turn, the motorcycle struck the truck. Mr. VanderZiel was killed on impact. The Howard County Police Department responded to the scene and the Howard County Police Department's Accident Investigation Unit assumed the investigation of the crash.

On August 14, 2024, the Independent Investigations Division ("IID") received information from the Maryland State Police Crash Team that the crash may have been a police-involved death.

On August 20, 2024, the IID assumed the investigation after determining that the incident was a police-involved fatality involving Officer Rodriguez.

The IID's investigation revealed that, on August 10, 2024, Officer Rodriguez, who was driving his marked police cruiser, engaged in a high-speed pursuit of Mr. VanderZiel that began in Anne Arundel County, continued through Prince George's County and into Howard County, where the

pursuit ended with the collision. Officer Rodriguez pursued Mr. VanderZiel for more than four miles at speeds twice the posted speed limit. At no time during the pursuit did Officer Rodriguez activate his lights or sirens, notify dispatch communications of the pursuit, or obtain authorization for the pursuit.

After the fatal collision, Officer Rodriguez abruptly stopped his vehicle, made a U-turn, and sped southbound on Washington Boulevard. He did not notify anyone or make a report of the collision, he did not remain on scene, and did not give aid. He returned to Anne Arundel County and continued his shift.

“I am absolutely appalled that an officer would endanger a person’s life and then flee the scene of a fatal crash without offering aid or reporting the incident,” **said Attorney General Brown.** “This disregard for human life and misconduct from a member of law enforcement is a betrayal of public trust that undermines the safety of communities that police are sworn to protect.”

Under Maryland law, the IID is charged with investigating police-involved incidents that result in the death of individuals or injuries likely to result in death, as well as any other crime related to police misconduct that is discovered during an investigation.

For incidents that occur after October 1, 2023, if the Attorney General determines that the investigation provides sufficient grounds for prosecution, then the IID has exclusive authority to prosecute the offense.

A criminal indictment is merely an accusation of wrongdoing, and not proof of a defendant’s guilt. Officer Rodriguez is presumed innocent until he is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2025/040225.pdf>