



# ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

## NEWS RELEASE



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Approved: SW  
Date: May 23, 2025  
Release No.: 25-069

### Intoxicated Driver Sentenced for 2022 Christmas Crash That Killed Passenger

VENTURA, Calif. – The Ventura County District Attorney's Office announced today that Michael Gordon Butler (DOB 09/04/84), of Simi Valley, was sentenced on May 20, 2025, to four years in state prison for the death of Coldren James Lee Udell Kiblinger. Butler previously pled guilty on April 24, 2025, to one felony count of gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated.

On December 25, 2022, California Highway Patrol officers responded to a 911 call reporting a crash on Santa Susana Pass Road in Simi Valley, where a Corvette had gone off the roadway and landed 200 feet down an embankment. Butler, who had recently purchased the car, left a family Christmas gathering around 6:00 p.m. with 23-year-old Coldren as his passenger. When the pair failed to return, concerned relatives used location-tracking apps to find the crash site and contacted authorities. CHP investigators determined Butler had been driving at a high rate of speed while impaired, lost control of the vehicle, and struck trees and the hillside, causing fatal injuries to Coldren.

Deputy District Attorney Jillian Ewan, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office DUI Unit, prosecuted the case.

"This was a preventable tragedy. Coldren Kiblinger's life was tragically cut down by Butler's grossly negligent decisions on December 25, 2022," Ms. Ewan said. "While no amount of time will bring Coldren back, I hope the guilty plea will give some sense of justice and closure for the hardship Coldren's family and friends have endured."

**Case: 2023028382**

**Defendant Information:**

Michael Gordon Butler (DOB 09/04/84)

Simi Valley

**Charges pled guilty to:**

- PC 191.5(a) – Gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated

**Special allegations admitted:**

- PC 1192.8(a) – Serious felony
- CRC 4.421(a)(1) – The crime involved great violence

