



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



Follow us @VenturaCountyDA
[DA.VenturaCounty.gov](https://www.DA.VenturaCounty.gov)

Contact: Richard Simon
Title: Senior Deputy District Attorney
Phone: (805) 654-2649
Email: Richard.Simon@venturacounty.gov

Approved: SW
Date: October 27, 2026
Release No.: 26-154

Port Hueneme Man Sentenced for Murdering Bicyclist with Vehicle

VENTURA, Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Samuel Matthew Rocha (DOB 01/25/93), of Port Hueneme, was sentenced to 27 years to life in state prison for the second-degree murder of 16-year-old Pedro Valdez and related assault convictions stemming from an April 2021 incident in Port Hueneme.

Rocha received a sentence of 15 years to life for second-degree murder, plus an additional 12 years for assault with a deadly weapon conviction.

Rocha pled guilty to second-degree murder on August 24, 2026, and admitted using his vehicle as a deadly weapon. In April 2026, a jury convicted Rocha of four counts of assault with a deadly weapon and two counts of battery. The jury also found true a special allegation that Rocha caused great bodily injury during the commission of a felony.

Senior Deputy District Attorneys Richard Simon and Craig Gardner prosecuted the case.

“A tragic loss of life occurred because of Mr. Rocha’s actions,” Mr. Simon said. “While his acceptance of responsibility is an important step, it cannot undo the devastating consequences of his actions. Pedro Valdez is missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.”

On the evening of April 19, 2021, Rocha used his Lexus sedan to target a group of seven bicyclists riding near the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Ventura Road in Port Hueneme. Rocha struck five of the bicyclists, killing 16-year-old Pedro Valdez and injuring four other minors. Two of the surviving victims suffered serious injuries.

Rocha fled the scene immediately after striking the bicyclists. A witness followed Rocha’s vehicle to his mother’s nearby apartment complex, where a responding Port Hueneme Police Department officer arrested him.

Approximately 11 minutes before striking the bicyclists, Rocha was involved in a separate violent incident at a laundromat. Rocha battered a man and woman before intentionally striking an employee with his vehicle as he left the parking lot. The incident was captured on surveillance video.

Following a jury trial in April 2026, Rocha was convicted of four counts of assault with a deadly weapon and two counts of battery. The jury was unable to reach verdicts on the remaining charges. On August 24, 2026, Rocha pled guilty to the second-degree murder of Pedro Valdez.

During the sentencing hearing, members of Pedro Valdez's family provided victim impact statements. Three additional named victims of the incident also provided statements describing the harm of Rocha's actions.

Case: 2021010640

Defendant Information:

Samuel Matthew Rocha (DOB 01/25/93)
Port Hueneme

Charges convicted of:

- PC 187(a) – Murder
- (4 counts) PC 245(a)(1) – Assault with deadly weapon (car)
- (2 counts) PC 242 – Battery

Special allegations found true or admitted:

- PC 12022(b)(1) – Use of deadly weapon
- PC 12022.7(a) – Great bodily injury in commission of felony

