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RICHMOND COUNTY

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **D.A. McMahon: Former New Jersey Cop Found Guilty on All Counts in Fatal Drunk Driving Crash That Killed Two Passengers**

*\*\*Pedro Abad drove drunk the wrong-way on the West Shore Expressway, causing a horrific crash that killed two of his passengers and seriously wounded another\*\**

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon today announced that **Pedro Abad** has been found guilty on all counts, including the top-counts of Aggravated Vehicular Homicide, for driving while intoxicated and causing a fatal car crash that killed two of his passengers and seriously wounded another.

**Abad**, 29, a former Linden, New Jersey Police Officer, was convicted today of all of the top counts against him, including four counts of Aggravated Vehicular Homicide. There were 19 total counts submitted to the jury for consideration, including Reckless Endangerment, Aggravated Vehicular Assault, and other charges. The verdict came following a two-week jury trial in Richmond County State Supreme Court before Justice Mario F. Mattei. **Abad** faces up to eight and a third to 25 years in prison when he is sentenced on June 8.

“Mr. Abad’s fateful choice to get behind the wheel while he was heavily intoxicated ended in a horrific and deadly crash that cost two of his friends their lives and seriously injured a third passenger. He also put the lives of other drivers on the road at risk when he sped down the Expressway traveling in the wrong direction,” said **District Attorney Michael E. McMahon**. “Today’s top-count conviction ensures that Mr. Abad will spend many years behind bars and that he is held accountable for the devastation he has caused. We hope and pray that this verdict gives some closure to the families and friends of all the victims affected by this tragedy. I would like to thank ADA’s Mark Palladino and Frank Prospero for their tireless efforts prosecuting this case and ensuring that justice is served.”

On March 20, 2015, at about 4:40 a.m., defendant **Abad** was driving while intoxicated when he entered the West Shore Expressway (Route 440) in the wrong direction near the Arden Avenue exit. The defendant continued traveling north in the southbound lane at a high rate of speed, forcing four other vehicles to swerve out of the way to avoid striking his 2015 Honda Civic before he crashed head-on into a tractor trailer without

braking. Two of **Abad's** passengers, Joseph Rodriguez and Frank Viggiano, both 28, were killed. Abad and another passenger, Patrick Kudlac, 25, both suffered serious injuries. The driver of the truck was also injured.

Earlier that evening, the defendant and Kudlac had gone to Central Park, a bar and restaurant in New Jersey, and drank whiskey before joining up with Rodriguez and Viggiano. From there, the group drove to Curves gentleman's club on Staten Island, arriving at around 2:21 a.m. Credit card receipts from that evening show that **Abad** had purchased numerous alcoholic beverages for himself and others throughout the night.

A blood sample of the defendant obtained by search warrant revealed **Abad** had a blood-alcohol content of .24 after the crash. A paramedic who treated **Abad** on scene immediately following the crash also testified that the defendant had a very strong odor of alcohol.

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The case was prosecuted by ADA Mark Palladino, Chief of the Trials Bureau, and ADA Frank Prospero.

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Defendant Information:

Pedro Abad

DOB 9/22/1987

Linden, NJ

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