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Press Release

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Drunk Driver Gets Maximum 20 Years For Causing Fatal Crash

A 24-year-old drunk driver has been sentenced to the maximum 20 years in prison for driving the wrong way on a Fort Worth freeway and slamming into an 18-wheeler, causing a fiery crash that killed a father of three.

On Tuesday after a jury was seated for his trial in state district Judge Mike Thomas' court, Louis Gerardo Nieves pled guilty to intoxication manslaughter in the March 28, 2011, death of Alejandro Raya, 45. The trial immediately proceeded into the punishment phase.

Prosecutors Richard Alpert and Mark Thielman presented evidence that Nieves had been drinking at a downtown club, where he consumed

at least 10 beers.

He left the club after it closed and was driving the wrong way on Interstate 30 at 2:30 a.m. when he slammed into an oncoming 18-wheeler carrying more than 7000 gallons of gas.

The tanker exploded, killing Raya and causing \$940,000 worth of damage to the I-30 bridge between Beach Street and Riverside Drive.

Nieves' blood alcohol concentration was .23 — nearly three times the legal limit — about 40 minutes after the crash.

Nieves had moved to the area from Vancouver, Wash., about six months before the crash.



Louis Nieves

The jury deliberated about an hour in assessing the maximum 20-year sentence. They also assessed the maximum \$10,000 fine. He must serve half of his sentence before he is eligible for parole.

"This crime tore a family apart, it literally tore the city apart," said prosecutor Richard Alpert. "Anyone who drives while intoxicated and takes a life better be prepared to face the maximum punishment because the time for tolerating this type of behavior is over."