



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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District of Arizona*

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## **SACATON MAN FOUND GUILTY OF 2<sup>ND</sup> DEGREE MURDER AND AGGRAVATED ASSAULT FOR VEHICULAR HOMICIDE OF GILBERT MAN**

PHOENIX – Webster Norris III, 44, of Sacaton, Ariz, was found guilty of Second Degree Murder and Aggravated Assault by a federal jury today, involving a vehicular homicide of a bicyclist on the Gila River Indian Reservation.

The facts showed that on September 20, 2008, Norris and a female co-employee spent the day drinking and driving. Norris consumed a 12-pack of Budweiser beer as well as 40-ounce cans of Old English. Throughout the day, Norris had been drinking and driving at various locations throughout the valley to include Chandler, Maricopa, Casa Blanca, Casa Grande and Sacaton, Ariz.

About 20 minutes before the collision, defendant raced through a residential area where emergency responders were trying to extinguish a residential fire. A friend observed defendant driving through the fire-scene and called Norris and warned him to slow down. The female passenger testified that she warned the defendant to slow down approximately 10 times. The passenger estimated Norris's speed reached as high as 90 mph.

Just prior to the collision, Norris passed two vehicles. The drivers of those vehicles testified as to the defendant's erratic driving as well as his high rate of speed. Norris then collided with a bicyclist, a 60-year-old Gilbert man who was cross-training in preparation for a marathon event in St. George, Utah. Witnesses testified that the victim was biking at an appropriate location on the road and the defendant had ample room to avoid the victim.

The impact of the collision was at such a high speed that the victim's left side of his body was mangled, to include total amputation of his left arm and hand and near amputation of the left side of his leg. The victim's amputated arm and hand flew into the defendant's car and into the back seat. The evidence showed defendant never slowed prior to hitting the victim or after hitting the victim. Norris drove his vehicle some distance down the road, stopped his vehicle and told his passenger to get out and run.

Norris was located 48 hours later and claimed he had no memory of the previous 48 hours due to his extreme intoxication. Evidence was presented that Norris had previously been convicted of Aggravated DUI in Tempe, Arizona and had been arrested for DUI twice in 2007 for drunk driving on the Gila River Indian Reservation.

A conviction for Second Degree Murder carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for Aggravated Assault carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, the judge will consult the U.S.

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Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Gila River Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Heather Nelson and Sharon Sexton, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-1523-PHX-MHM  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-215(Norris)

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