



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 2, 2016 **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney
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**Sacramento Man Withdraws Insanity Plea after being
Convicted of Assault with a Deadly Weapon of Cyclists**

(Woodland, CA) – December 2, 2016 - District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced today that on December 1, 2016, 38-year-old Sacramento man, Alamar Cyril Houston, withdrew his insanity plea a day after a Yolo County jury found him guilty of intentionally running over three cyclists.

On June 30, 2015, Houston stole a truck in Glenn County and recklessly drove it down I-5 through Yolo County nearly hitting several motorists who were on their way to work. After crossing the Sacramento River into Sacramento County, Houston crashed the stolen truck near the Sacramento International Airport. After crashing, he hopped over the center median, ran across I-5, and stole a Hyundai SUV from a rental company at the airport. He drove into Downtown Sacramento with the stolen SUV where he intentionally hit a motorcyclist twice, knocking him off the motorcycle and injuring him. Houston fled the scene, but tried to hit another motorcyclist a few blocks away with the SUV.

Houston then drove over the Freeport Bridge into Clarksburg, Yolo County where a group of cyclists were participating in the "Tuesday River Ride," an organized bike ride for avid cyclists. On South River Road, Houston pulled up next to cyclist Don Dumaine and intentionally hit Dumaine from the side, knocking him to the ground and injuring him. Houston again did not stop his SUV, but rather continued driving down South River Road for about a quarter mile when he encountered teenage cyclists Jonathan Jackson and Taariq Jensen. Houston, driving 20-30 mph faster than the teens were riding, intentionally ran them over with the SUV and sped away from the injured riders. Jackson was thrown off the hood of the SUV and Jensen struck the windshield. Jackson suffered injuries to his ankle while Jensen suffered more critical injuries that required him to be airlifted to Kaiser Hospital. There, Jensen was placed in a medically induced coma for several weeks and had to have a portion of his skull removed to deal with a serious head injury.

Houston's crime spree continued after running over the teens as he drove from South River Road into West Sacramento. Houston went to the Walgreens on West Capitol Boulevard and Jefferson Boulevard where he punched a store clerk in the face and stole a case of water. Immediately after leaving the Walgreens, West Sacramento Police Officer Dan Gill spotted Houston in the stolen SUV and attempted to pull the SUV over. Houston, however, refused to pull over and led Officer Gill on a dangerous high

speed pursuit into Sacramento where he ran red lights and drove into oncoming traffic. Houston eventually abandoned the SUV in a Downtown Sacramento ally where he ran from Officer Gill and assaulted Officer Gill's K-9, Diesel, before being taken into custody.

The jury convicted Houston of four counts of assault with a deadly weapon with an enhancement for causing great bodily injury to Jensen, three counts of hit-and-run causing injury, two counts of vehicle theft, reckless evasion of a peace officer, evasion of a peace officer while driving the wrong way, assault, and resisting arrest. The jury acquitted Houston of attempted murder and DUI causing injury.

Houston had originally pled not guilty by reason of insanity, but withdrew his plea after a half day of testimony during the sanity phase of the trial. That allowed for the case to proceed to a trial on Houston's prior criminal conduct. The Honorable David Rosenberg found, after a court trial, that Houston had suffered a prior "strike" conviction for a 2001 Sacramento robbery and had served four prior prison terms for the robbery as well as for felony convictions of being a felon in possession of a firearm, escaping from custody, and possessing illegal substances while in prison. Because Houston has a prior "strike" conviction for the robbery and was convicted of new "strike" offenses for the assaults with a deadly weapon, Judge Rosenberg also found true that the allegation that Houston is a "habitual criminal."

District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated, "A vehicle is a dangerous and potentially deadly weapon when in the hands of someone who does not care for the rules or the wellbeing of others. The defendant clearly proved this on June 30 and forever changed the lives of many innocent and vulnerable people, including two young adults, as a result of his heinous, reprehensible, and unacceptable conduct. Hopefully, the jury's verdict puts a stop to a life of crime that the defendant has inflicted on the victims in this case and on our community."

This case was investigated by the California Highway Patrol with assistance from the Yolo County District Attorney's Office, the Yolo County Sheriff's Office, the West Sacramento Police Department, the Sacramento Sheriff's Office, and the Sacramento Police Department.

Houston was previously in custody in Yolo County in 2014 for charges of felony petty theft, but was released with the passage of Proposition 47. Proposition 47 was a criminal justice measure that reclassified many "non-violent" crimes to misdemeanors. Despite his extensive criminal record, Houston's charges qualified under Proposition 47 and he was released from custody. At the time of the events, he was in abscond from the court and an arrest warrant had been issued for him.

Houston remains in custody of the Yolo County Jail pending sentencing which is scheduled for January 6, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in Department 14. Houston faces 36 years in state prison.

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