

Young men accused in Bayshore crash to change pleas

Cameron Herrin will ask a judge's mercy, while John Barrineau readies for guilty plea.



A small memorial for Jessica Reisinger-Raubenolt, of Jermesville, Ohio, can be seen off of Bayshore Boulevard and West Knights Avenue. Reisinger, 24, was struck while pushing her baby in a stroller. [TIMES | (2018)] [Times (2018)]

By **Dan Sullivan**

TAMPA — The two young men accused of causing a 2018 crash that killed a mother and her young daughter on an iconic Tampa roadway appear poised to resolve their criminal cases.

Attorneys for Cameron Herrin and John Barrineau announced in a pretrial hearing Monday that both defendants intend to change their not-guilty pleas. Both face charges of vehicular homicide and racing related to the May 23, 2018, deaths of Jessica Reisinger-Raubenolt and her 21-month-old daughter, Lillia.

Herrin, 21, is expected to enter what's known as an open plea later this week. That means, in essence, he will put his fate in a judge's hands.

State sentencing guidelines suggest Herrin could get about 18 years in prison, his attorney, John Fitzgibbons, said in court. He will argue for less than that. The charges carry up to 30 years.

Herrin was not present in Monday's court hearing, which was conducted via Zoom video conference.

Barrineau, 20, is ready to accept an offer to plead guilty, his attorney said. In exchange, prosecutors will ask for a sentence of six years in prison.

He sat quietly, wearing a dark suit and tie, listening as his attorney, Anthony Rickman, spoke with the judge.

"He's prepared to begin his sentence as soon as the court is inclined to accept his plea," Rickman said.

Prosecutors negotiated the plea agreement in recent weeks after receiving an "extensive mitigation packet" from Rickman, Assistant State Attorney Aaron Hubbard said. The packet included information about his defense at trial and his willingness to accept responsibility.

The state's offer includes a 15-year probation sentence to follow the prison term, Hubbard said. Barrineau will be required to cooperate with the state and provide testimony against Herrin.

Hubbard noted that Barrineau is "situated differently" from Herrin regarding his involvement in the case.

The pair had been set to go to trial next month. Prosecutors have said they were racing in separate cars, a Ford Mustang and a Nissan Altima. Herrin, who drove the Mustang, reached speeds in excess of 100 mph moments before the car struck the mother as she pushed her daughter across the road in a stroller, according to prosecutors and police.

The case has attracted much public interest since the May 23, 2018, crash. It was one of several fatal traffic crashes that have occurred in the past two years along the scenic waterfront stretch of South Tampa. City officials took steps to bolster traffic and pedestrian safety, installing new traffic lights and lowering the speed limit on the 4-mile road.

News of the case's possible resolution came weeks after the defense attorneys unsuccessfully tried to have key evidence thrown out. They argued that police used a flawed search warrant application to obtain data from a so-called Infotainment system that recorded the Mustang's speed and location information. Hillsborough Circuit Judge Christopher Nash declined to grant the defense's request, propelling the case toward trial.

Hubbard said he has spoken with Reisinger-Raubenolt's family, and they agreed with the plea offer.

Judge Nash set a new hearing for Thursday. Barrineau may receive his sentence that day.

But in Herrin's case, he will be entitled to undergo what's known as a presentence investigation of his character and background. That could take 30 to 45 days to complete.

Sometime after that, Herrin will be able to present testimony from his family members, friends or others in a formal sentencing hearing to argue for a lesser penalty.

“We anticipate a significant presentation to the court at that hearing,” Fitzgibbons told the judge.

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