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**PRESS RELEASE** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On February 7, 2023, a Bell County jury returned a “**NOT GUILTY**” verdict against former Temple Police Officer Carmen Decruz in the 264th District Court.

On December 2, 2019, Officer Decruz, while on duty as a patrol officer, encountered motorist Michael Dean, who he attempted to stop for speeding (79 MPH in a 40 MPH zone). Instead of stopping, as he was required to do, Dean accelerated and attempted to evade from Officer Decruz, only stopping his felonious flight due to heavy vehicle traffic at a busy intersection. Officer Decruz used his police vehicle to prevent Dean from fleeing and acted swiftly to confront Dean and protect the innocent civilians of the City of Temple. Dean continued to obstruct Officer Decruz, which culminated in Dean engaging Officer Decruz in a “tug of war” over his vehicle’s keys and intentionally swatting Officer Decruz’ handgun, leading to it being discharged, killing Dean instantly. Dean was later found to have a blood alcohol concentration of .200 (two and a half times more than the legal limit for intoxication). The incident was captured by both Officer Decruz’ in-car and body-worn video cameras.

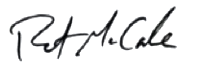
In March 2020, Decruz was indicted by a Bell County grand jury for the offense of “manslaughter.” If convicted, Decruz faced up to 20 years in prison.

After 10 days of trial, the jury returned a swift and powerful verdict of NOT GUILTY against Decruz.

Carmen Decruz did not put on his gun for work that fateful evening with any intent on firing it at anyone. This situation turned into something he was not expecting; a tragic accident and one that demanded answers. As a community, we looked to the justice system to find those answers. We expected to see a thorough, accurate and transparent examination of all of the evidence.

At trial, we expected the evidence to be represented fairly, honestly and completely by the prosecution. That didn’t happen in this trial until Carmen Decruz and his team exposed the truth about what really happened. The prosecution consistently misrepresented the evidence, failed to analyze the key video recordings and preyed on the jury’s emotions instead of focusing on the objective facts of the case.

The jury heard and, more importantly, saw with their own eyes, the whole, real truth about the contact between Officer Decruz and Michael Dean on December 2, 2019. The uncomfortable truth is that intoxicated, violent people often make poor choices and that sometimes those choices lead to tragic, accidental results, as in this case.



Robert M. McCabe

Attorney for Carmen Decruz