



# HAWTHORNE POLICE DEPARTMENT

12501 South Hawthorne Boulevard, Hawthorne, California, 90250

## PRESS RELEASE

Issued: June 17, 2015

*Suitable For Public Dissemination*

### **Victim of Hit and Run Fatal Traffic Collision Vehicle Sold**

On April 13, 2014 at approximately 2:24 a.m. a fatal hit and run traffic collision occurred in the 12100 block of Prairie Avenue. Investigation eventually led to the identification and arrest of the 24 year old driver and Hawthorne resident, Edvin Tautiu. The victim's vehicle was held for evidence during the course of the criminal proceedings. The defendant was convicted by a plea of guilty on December 2, 2014 for felony hit and run. The defendant returned to court in January for the start of his probation and sentence hearings. The victim's vehicle was released from an evidence hold in January 2015.

At the end of January, tow company records indicate that the victim's father advised that he would bring the vehicle release given to him by the police department to obtain the victim's vehicle however, the father never sought release of the vehicle. On February 17, 2015, lien sale notices were sent by the tow company via certified mail to the legal owner of the victim's vehicle and the registered owner on record advising the date of sale of March 26, 2015. The victim's vehicle was sold at auction since no responsible party came forward to claim the vehicle following standard procedures. The tow company nor the police department had received any documentation indicating that the vehicle was paid for by any insurance company and all records indicated that the finance company was still the legal owner.

The victim's mother did not attempt to contact the tow company until June 12, 2015 regarding the victim's vehicle. We learned that the mother's main concern was over any property left behind by the victim. The tow company contacted the new buyer of the vehicle and learned that the clothing that was left in the trunk of the vehicle was damaged from the elements and destroyed. Any items of value were recovered the night of the incident and booked into property at the police department.

The victim's mother has already made arrangements to identify the property that was recovered at the scene including a necklace, ring, cell phones, clothing, and a wallet that are believed to belong to the victim. The property will be released to the mother pending identification.

The Hawthorne Police Department sympathizes with the mother and family of the victim and is making every attempt to help her with the process and recover the items belonging to her daughter.

Contact: **Lieutenant A. Yoshida**

Detective Bureau Commander / Public Information Officer

(310) 349-2820 Detective Bureau / (310) 349-2727 Watch Commander