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Romanucci & Blandin secured \$21.3 million Verdict against Chicago Police in Fatal Car Crash Killing Mother of Five

April 24, 2019

Romanucci & Blandin, LLC announced today that a jury found the City of Chicago and two Chicago Police Department (CPD) officers liable for the death of a 37-year-old mother of five following a horrific car accident in early December 2015 when a reportedly stolen vehicle collided with the family's van during a high-speed chase with police on the city's South Side.

The jury, impaneled before Cook County Circuit Court Judge Joan E. Powell, issued its verdict finding that the officers displayed conscious disregard for community safety by engaging in the deadly pursuit.

On Dec. 12, 2015, the Carreon family was travelling eastbound on 71st Street, near the intersection of 71st Street and Carpenter Street, en route to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Des Plaines, when the two CPD officers began to pursue a vehicle reported stolen. The officers chased the stolen vehicle through narrow residential streets, driving over the speed limit through at least three stop signs and accelerating through speed bumps. As the driver of the stolen vehicle attempted to elude police, he crashed into the Carreon family's van.

Maria Carrion Adame, a 37-year-old mother of five children was killed. Her 15-year-old daughter Leslie Carrion, brother Ricardo Carreon, sisters Ericka Carreon and Viridiana Castillo, and her niece Jaslin Castillo all sustained serious and permanent injuries including serious pelvic and clavicle fractures, broken ribs and vertebrae, and injuries to internal organs.

"While we are pleased with today's verdict to hold these police officers and the City of Chicago responsible for acting with utter indifference, no amount of money is greater than the cost of human life lost in this incident. As a result of these officers choosing to chase a stolen property that did not require pursuit, a mother was killed, leaving behind her husband and five children," said Antonio M. Romanucci, the plaintiffs' attorney and founding partner at Romanucci & Blandin, LLC. "Our officers must be protecting people over property. Yet, a culture of protecting their own has fostered an environment that promotes and allows Chicago police officers to act carelessly without fear of the consequences."

The officers involved violated numerous CPD pursuit policies during this incident, including failing to terminate the pursuit as it was only initiated for a property crime, failing to have a marked squad car be the primary pursuit vehicle, and most importantly, failing to switch on their lights and sirens on during the pursuit. The Carreon family was left without warning that the dangerous situation was approaching and not able to protect themselves. Additionally, during

the pursuit, a Sergeant from another district ordered the officers via radio to terminate the pursuit immediately once he learned it was only for the possession of a stolen vehicle.

In addition to Romanucci, Senior Associate Bhavani K. Raveendran and Associates Martin D. Gould, Nicolette A. Ward and Debra Thomas were instrumental in representing the Carreon family.