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DRUGGED DRIVER RECEIVES **MAXIMUM SENTENCE**

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On Tuesday, July 21, 2017, a Victoria County jury convicted Jesus Christopher Garcia of Driving While Intoxicated with a Child Passenger. At trial, the State presented evidence showing that on or about July 1, 2016, the Defendant was traveling from Victoria to Corpus Christi along US 77 when he was stopped by Trooper James Vinson of the Texas Department of Public Safety for an improperly secured temporary license plate. Trooper Vinson observed the Defendant to have slurred speech and trouble formulating a sentence. Suspecting that the Defendant was under the influence of narcotics, Trooper Vinson called Trooper Natee Wong, who has been trained by DPS as a drug recognition expert. The Defendant failed a series of field sobriety tests that were administered on the scene and again at the Victoria County Jail.

A Victoria County grand jury indicted the Defendant in March of 2017. The Defendant's trial lasted two days, as the State presented testimony from the DPS Troopers as well as a forensic scientist from the Austin DPS Crime Lab. Forensic Scientist Jamie Mraz testified that the Defendant's blood revealed he was under the influence of hydrocodone and marijuana at the time of the traffic stop. At closing argument, ACDA Thomas Dillard argued that driving while intoxicated is a crime that endangers the entire community, not only the intoxicated driver. At the punishment phase of the trial, the State presented evidence showing the Defendant had previously been convicted of three felony drug offenses, two of which were first degree felony convictions for delivery of cocaine and Ecstasy (MDMA). The jury sentenced the Defendant to the maximum sentence of two years in a state jail facility and imposed a \$5,000 fine. First Assistant Criminal District Attorney Brendan Guy assisted in the prosecution of the Defendant.

