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## CHP: Driver in crash that killed 4 was drunk, high

**By J. Harry Jones**

UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

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As Anthony Boles was being pulled from the flaming SUV by a good Samaritan, his leg mangled, he was screaming in pain and saying: "I wasn't driving! It wasn't me! I wasn't driving!"

Boles, 24, certainly had reason for wanting authorities to believe he was a passenger.

The California Highway Patrol says Boles was driving, while drunk and high on methamphetamine, just before midnight Friday on state Route 76 east of Pala when the sport utility vehicle he was driving crossed the center line and hit a Toyota Camry head-on.

Two North County couples in the Camry, out for a night of casino-hopping, were killed.

Boles, of Palm Springs, has spent much of his adult life in jail and prison or on probation for a variety of crimes, has had at least one DUI conviction, and was on probation and driving without a license at the time of the crash.

Boles was injured in the crash, as was his female passenger. He was listed in good condition yesterday; the woman, Deanna Fridley, was in critical condition.

Boles is under guard at Palomar Medical Center in Escondido. When he recovers enough to be arraigned, he will face a host of charges, including four counts of vehicular manslaughter, driving while under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and possession of drugs, CHP Officer Tom Kerns said. Methamphetamine was found hidden in Boles' sock, Kerns said.

The first person to arrive at the accident scene, about two miles east of the Pala Casino, was Benjamin Young, 27, of Carmel Mountain Ranch, who was returning home from a night out with his grandmother at the Pauma Casino.

Young said he drove up just moments after the accident and saw both vehicles upside down in the road. The SUV's engine was on fire.

Young said he grabbed Boles, who is 6 feet 4 and weighs about 260 pounds, and dragged him about 20 feet from the SUV. He said Boles had been lying on the pavement next to the driver's door.

"His left leg was completely flipped around about 180 degrees," Young said. Boles kept saying he hadn't been driving, then lost consciousness and his heart stopped.

Young, a former volunteer firefighter, said he performed CPR and was about to start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation when Boles started coughing. Other people who had come upon the accident were tending to the people in the Camry, three of whom died at the scene. The fourth died soon after at a hospital.

Killed were Jesus De Santiago, 45, and Lina De Santiago, 46, of Escondido and Rubi Baez, 46, and Luis Baez, 51, of Vista. The couples had been friends for many years and were out for a night of fun, a relative said. The Baezes are survived by three sons, the Santiagos by a daughter and a son.

Boles' license had been suspended, for at least the second time, four days before the crash for lack of insurance, the Department of Motor Vehicles said.

According to Riverside County Superior Court records, Boles was convicted in 2003 of several misdemeanor drug charges and given probation. A year later, he was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon and sentenced to two years in prison.

Having served about six months in a local jail, he was released from prison later that year but was rearrested for drug possession and sentenced to one year in jail, of which he served a few months.

In early 2005, Boles was arrested for violating probation and sent to prison for a year. Part of his sentence was a requirement that he attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

In August 2006, Boles was pulled over along Interstate 10 near Banning after being clocked driving 96 mph in a 70-mph zone. He pleaded guilty to several charges, including driving with a suspended license, and was given probation.

A short time later, Boles was arrested for driving while under the influence and sentenced to 10 days in jail, which he served during five weekends beginning Dec. 1, 2006.

Part of that sentence included an order that he install an ignition-interlock device on his GMC Sierra pickup. Such a device tests for alcohol on a driver's breath by requiring the operator to blow into a sensor. The vehicle can't be started if more than a small amount of alcohol is detected.

The SUV involved in the crash Friday night was a GMC Yukon. It was unclear to whom it belonged or if it was equipped with such a device.

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office has been known to charge repeat drunken-driving offenders involved in fatal accidents with murder rather than gross vehicular manslaughter, which carries a much lighter sentence. A murder conviction can mean life in prison.

A spokesman for the District Attorney's Office said yesterday that the case is being investigated and that no decisions have been made.

Kerns said the CHP is confident that Boles was the driver and was at fault. He also said it appears that Boles had been drinking at one of the North County casinos before the accident.

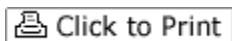
"This is very sad that we have to put up with this kind of thing," Kerns said. "I'm just tired of it. These are people that died. This is Christmastime. This is not supposed to happen."

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