

Tuesday, 27th May 2008

## Drugged driver jailed



Drug crazed: Alberton Ramos



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### ADVERTISEMENT

A drugged driver who left a mother and daughter with just one leg each after ploughing into six shoppers, was jailed for four years today.

Alberto Ramos, 33, was high on crystal meth when he lost control of his car in Regent Street in London's West End.

Kayleigh Reeve - who was celebrating her 21st birthday - and her mother Victoria, 43, from Pontefract, West Yorks, both had to have their right legs amputated.

Ramos, of Capland Street, St John's Wood, north west London, who had just bought some more drugs, admitted dangerous driving and two counts of unlawful wounding on February 16 last year.

He showed no reaction as Southwark Crown Court judge Geoffrey Rivlin QC told him: "This was a calamitous collision with your car and a number of pedestrians as you mounted a pavement in the heart of the West End." The judge, who said there were suggestions the defendant may have jumped a red light seconds before the accident, continued: "The collision was horrific, you caused mayhem."

As both Ramos' victims listened from the public gallery, he then added: "To drive in the heart of a great city in such a state that you could not control your vehicle is grave indeed."

Both Mrs Reeve - who suffered the horror of seeing her severed right foot a few feet away from her - and her daughter declined to comment after the case.

The court heard Ramos had snorted a gram of crystal meth the previous night.

He later told a probation officer that having run out he decided to meet his dealer and get some more.

It was as he drove home through the 5pm Friday rush hour in his Kia Carens and negotiated the Regents Street and Margaret Street junction that the accident happened.

A traffic engineer later told police Ramos drove through the lights either during the last three seconds of amber or at the beginning of the red phase.

Travelling at up to 25mph, he was then "seen to inexplicably veer off the road in a straight line and mount the footpath".

A split second later he careered into a lamppost, knocking it to the ground, and then ploughed into a group of

pedestrians.

Karen Holt, prosecuting, said: "The collision left six victims in hospital. Two of them, a mother and daughter, lost their right legs... as a direct result of this defendant's driving.

"A number of others were also seriously injured."

She told the court Mrs Reeve, who had come to London with her daughter and two of her friends to celebrate the 21-year-old's birthday, later remembered seeing the car head directly for her.

"The driver's side of the car drove straight into her and she was thrown up in the air, landing on her back near the front driver's wheel.

"Unfortunately, she was fully aware throughout of what was going on and saw that her right foot above the ankle had been torn off and was about three to four feet away.

"She was taken to hospital where her leg was unable to be saved and she had an above the knee amputation."

The barrister said the woman's daughter recalled the collision but little afterwards.

"She was later told that she had lost her leg below her right knee."

The court heard when police arrived they were met with a "tangled heap of bodies" in front of Ramos' car.

One of them was Kevin O'Reilly who was to later tell police that after being knocked to the ground he remembered "two females on top of him, one with a severed leg".

Another of the pedestrians, David Sullivan, recalled seeing the "amputated leg sticking into Mr O'Reilly's back".

Ms Holt said: "Others suffered the trauma of seeing these injuries at first hand."

She said after a "puzzled-looking" Ramos had been arrested he told a doctor he had earlier "snorted a whole bag - one gram - of methamphetamine (MA).

"He admitted to being a daily user of this drug."

She added that the drug was widely known to affect driving ability.

"Typical driving behaviour can include drifting out of lane, erratic driving and drifting off the road. Usage of MA impairs judgement and increases risk taking," Ms Holt added.

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