

**Mayor's Daughter Convicted of Felony Hit-and-Run**

[School Code][If more than one student per school, decide who is "A," "B," etc. and add letter.]

RIVERSIDE — Following a tense trial Saturday at the Riverside County Courthouse, Hidden Valley teenager Adrian Vega was convicted of a felony hit-and-run committed last April.

Vega, a former student of Hidden Valley High School and rising swim star, is the daughter of Hidden Valley mayor, Angelica Vega. Mayor Vega is an avid supporter of FADD, Families Against Distracted Driving.

Cameron Douglas, the victim of the hit-and-run accident, was a zealous biker, owner of a bike shop, and leader of Hidden Valley's biking club at the time of the accident. Toni De Luca, a key prosecution witness, was a foreign exchange student living with the Vegas last April.

On the night of April 19, Vega and De Luca began driving home from a championship-qualifying swim meet. Shortly after, Douglas was hit by a car speeding recklessly through an intersection. Douglas testified that she suffered a mild concussion, a cracked collarbone, a shattered right knee, and several abrasions. Douglas and two eyewitnesses told the court that they recognized the car as one Vega usually drives.

According to the prosecution, Vega drove De Luca home that night. Due to a win at the meet, the swim star was texting while driving. This oversight caused her to hit Douglas and keep driving in a blatant disregard for "human life and limb." Upon the prosecution calling De Luca to the stand, Vega frowned, appearing to see this testimony as the ultimate betrayal.

Prosecutor Daniella Dichter pushed forth her point in a passionate closing argument, claiming, “The defendant’s actions that night were consistent with a person who has just committed a crime and had a guilty mind.”

The defense, trying to cast doubt on the prosecution theory, argued that De Luca could have been the driver during the collision. Upon calling Vega to the stand, the defendant sadly recounted her story, claiming that, had she been driving, “It wouldn’t have even been a second thought. [She] would’ve stopped and helped [Douglas].”

Defense attorney Parker Stewart, putting his hand on the back of the defendant’s chair, pleaded with the court, “Don’t compound this tragedy by convicting the wrong person.”

In a pre-trial motion, the defense requested the court to have an incriminating statement declared inadmissible in the trial because it believed police had failed to read the defendant her Miranda rights prior to interrogating her. Despite the calm yet powerful argument from prosecutor Rachel Den, the motion was granted.

After a few moments of deliberation, Judge Linda Dunham convicted Vega of felony hit-and-run. In an interview after the bench trial, Judge Dunham noted that the reason behind her decision was the “strength of the prosecution witnesses’ testimonies.”

Vega bowed her head in mournful resignation as the verdict was read.