

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 12-636

RELEASE NUMBER

December 17, 2021

RELEASE DATE

Joyce E. Dudley

Sarah Barkley, Deputy District Attorney

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

RE: People v Christina Ann Watanabe Case No. 21CR08241

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that a Felony Complaint has been filed against Christina Watanabe, 50, of West Hills, California. The charges stem from a single vehicle collision on December 7, 2021 in Summerland, in the southern region of Santa Barbara County. Ms. Watanabe was driving a Chevrolet Silverado pick-up truck with four passengers on US-101 southbound when she allegedly intentionally drove off the roadway in the area of the Evans Avenue off-ramp. The vehicle traveled down a 100-foot embankment and came to a rest, on its side, about five feet from the railroad tracks. Thankfully, the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner was able to stop in time to avoid a further collision.

Ms. Watanabe's passengers included three juveniles who suffered minor injuries and one elderly woman who suffered moderate injuries. All passengers were treated and released from Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital following the incident.

Ms. Watanabe is charged with the following felony counts: assault with a deadly weapon in violation of Penal Code section 245(a)(1), three counts of child endangerment in violation of Penal Code section 273a(a), and one count of elder abuse in violation of Penal Code section 368(b)(1).

On December 16, 2021, Ms. Watanabe appeared in Department 8. The case is set for further arraignment on December 27, 2021 in Department 8 and has been assigned to Department 1 of the Santa Barbara Superior Court, Anacapa Division, for all other purposes. Bail has been set at \$2,000,000.

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