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**MEDIA ADVISORY: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, May 29, 2025

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY DISMISSES UBER DRIVER MURDER CASE AFTER DEFENDANT'S DEATH**

EL PASO, Texas (05/29/2025) – El Paso District Attorney James Montoya announced the dismissal of a murder charge against a woman accused of shooting and killing her Uber driver.

Phoebe Copas was accused of killing Daniel Piedra on June 16, 2023. Piedra was driving Copas to Speaking Rock Casino in the Lower Valley from West El Paso. While on the ramp from U.S. 54 South to Loop 375 E, Copas shot Piedra in the head from the backseat. Copas claimed she feared he was kidnapping her to Juarez, but location-based evidence showed Piedra was following the mapped route to her requested destination. Copas was charged with Piedra's murder.

While in El Paso to attend a court hearing on March 25, 2025, Copas was found unresponsive in a hotel room. A subsequent autopsy revealed she died from natural causes. DA Montoya formally dropped the charge on May 29 in order to close the case and to allow Piedra's family to allow this tragic chapter in their lives to close. He made the announcement during a news conference alongside nearly a dozen of Mr. Piedra's family members.

“We are confident that, had we proceeded, a jury would have convicted Ms. Copas of murder,” said DA Montoya. “Evidence would have shown her actions were objectively unreasonable and unnecessary.”

In Texas, families of victims may deliver a victim impact statement to the defendant once official court proceedings have concluded. DA Montoya said he wanted Mr. Piedra’s family to have an opportunity to speak about how they’ve been affected by the loss of their loved one.

Mr. Piedra’s niece, Didi Lopez, thanked the community for their support during the ordeal.

“My uncle was the victim. He was taken from us in such a senseless way,” said Didi Lopez. “He wasn’t a criminal. He didn’t even have a traffic ticket.

“He was loving, funny and hardworking. He would give the shirt off his back,” Lopez continued, adding that her uncle had only been driving for Uber two weeks until his death. “This has left a huge hole in our lives.”

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