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## Teen Killed in Coast Range Hit-and-Run, Driver Suspected to Have Fled Country

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— Categories: Crime



Oregon State Police are searching for a man from Tillamook who is suspected of fleeing the United States after allegedly causing a fatal crash in the Oregon Coast Range. The incident, which occurred earlier this month, left one teenager dead and several others seriously injured.

The collision happened in the early morning hours of July 12 on Highway 18 near milepost 14 in Tillamook County. At approximately 3:15 a.m., a white Honda Civic heading eastbound

struck three teenage boys changing a flat tire on a black Nissan Altima parked on the roadside. A 17-year-old female, sitting inside the Nissan during the crash, was not injured.

Authorities say the Honda driver did not stop after the crash and continued driving east. The Oregon State Police (OSP) later identified the suspect as 34-year-old Alejandro Christopher Velazquez Lopez of Tillamook.

All three male victims, each 17 years old, were rushed to nearby hospitals with critical injuries. Tragically, two days later, one of the teens died from the injuries sustained in the collision. OSP then reclassified the case as a fatal crash.

Following the incident, OSP investigators from the Major Crime Section launched an extensive search for Lopez, but efforts to locate him have been unsuccessful. Authorities now believe he has fled the country. A warrant for his arrest remains active.

“The highway was impacted for approximately 1 1.5 hours during the on-scene investigation,” OSP confirmed in a statement.

The crash has drawn significant local attention, not only because of the tragic loss of life but also due to the hit-and-run nature of the incident. Law enforcement agencies across the region have since joined the investigation. Those assisting include the Tillamook County Sheriff’s Office, Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office, Lincoln City Police Department, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Police, and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

While Highway 18 has not typically ranked among the more dangerous routes in the state, nearby Highway 6 has been a consistent hotspot for crashes and fatalities, particularly in recent years. In 2021, that stretch of road saw an unprecedented number of serious accidents, prompting calls for increased safety measures.

Velazquez Lopez’s disappearance has intensified frustrations among families impacted by the crash. Law enforcement officials are urging anyone with information about his whereabouts to come forward, emphasizing that justice for the victims depends on cooperation from the public.

OSP has not released the identities of the teens involved due to their age, and no further details have been shared about the deceased minor at this time.