



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Brazos County Jury Gives Prison Sentence for Killing Two While Texting & Watching Videos While Driving**

**August 30, 2023**

Bryan, TX - On August 29, 2023, a Brazos County Jury sentenced Brandon Bowers, 38, of Houston, Texas to five years in prison for the manslaughter of Charles and Madora Swist. These charges were a result of distracted driving.

On the night of November 2, 2018, Madora Swist was on her way to Bryan to visit family with her three young sons. As she approached College Station, Madora missed the exit for Millican to fill up with gasoline. She ran out of gas near Santa's Wonderland in the northbound lane of South Highway 6. As a result, she pulled over to the side of the road, activated her hazard lights, and called her father, Charles Swist, for help.

Charles Swist responded to the side of South Highway 6 to help his daughter refill her gas tank. Charles pulled behind Madora, activated his hazard lights, and used his headlights to illuminate Madora's vehicle. While filling the gas tank, Madora and Charles were struck and killed by the defendant.

Texas Department of Public Safety troopers and the Brazos County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene. They interviewed the defendant, who admitted that he was looking at his phone and did not see the victims on the side of the road. The defendant also admitted that he had deleted Instagram before law enforcement arrived. During the investigation, law enforcement seized and downloaded the defendant's cell phone.

Prosecutors presented evidence during the trial that the download showed that the defendant watched and recorded videos, sent and read text messages on multiple platforms, and took screenshots prior to the crash. Prosecutors also presented evidence that as a result of the Defendant being distracted on his phone, he crossed over the fog line and struck both vehicles and both victims at highway speeds.





## PRESS RELEASE

At the time of the crash, all three of Madora's sons were inside her vehicle. They were not physically injured in the collision.

This case was investigated by the Texas Department of Public Safety, Brazos County Sheriff's Office, and Investigator Tiffany Graves with the Brazos County District Attorney's Office. This case was prosecuted by Brian Baker and Jessica Escue, with Victim Assistance provided by Shae Cooks.

**“Texting and making videos on your cell phone while driving is reckless, unacceptable and deadly. The jury sent a clear message that prison is the way this community will deal with those selfish acts.” —Brian Baker & Jessica Escue, Assistant District Attorneys**

