

Elizabeth man sentenced to eight years for alcohol-fueled fatal pedestrian hit-and-run

An Elizabeth man who was driving drunk on the night he struck and killed a pedestrian in Linden last year before fleeing the scene has been sentenced to eight years in state prison for the crime, acting Union County Prosecutor Michael A. Monahan announced Friday.

Eduardo Perez, 34, must serve at least 85 percent of the sentence before the possibility of parole under New Jersey's No Early Release Act.

At about 12:30 a.m. on Friday, May 12, 2017, Linden Police Department patrol units responded to the 1200 block of East Linden Avenue on a report of a motor vehicle incident, according to Union County Assistant Prosecutor Melissa Spagnoli, who prosecuted the case. An investigation led by the Linden Police Department Accident Investigation Team determined that a 2007 Ford Escape being driven by Perez and traveling eastbound at that location struck 23-year-old Mujahid Henry of Newark, who was thrown into a nearby parked car and pronounced dead at the scene, Spagnoli said.

Perez then drove into Elizabeth and abandoned the SUV on the 700 block of Lidgerwood Avenue, colliding with several parked vehicles in the process. He was located by Elizabeth Police Department patrol units on nearby Kenneth Avenue moments later and arrested.

The investigation determined that Perez was speeding and on the wrong side of the road when he struck and killed Henry. Perez also was found to have been in possession of a nearly

empty bottle of cognac when he was arrested, and his blood-alcohol level was recorded at more than twice the legal limit of 0.08. At the time of the incident Perez also was on probation and driving on a suspended license following convictions on charges including robbery and aggravated assault.

Perez pleaded guilty in January 2018 to charges including second-degree vehicular homicide and driving while intoxicated. Approximately 20 friends and family members of Henry attended Friday's sentencing, and both of his parents read victim statements into the record.