

Man Convicted of Running Over, Killing Woman in Church Parking Lot Sentenced

An Ohio man accused of running over and killing a woman who tried to stop him from stealing her family's van in a church parking lot has been sentenced to life in prison with parole eligibility in 23 years.

The sentencing on Monday came after a jury in Cleveland last month convicted Michael Preston, 24, of murder and other charges.

Lesley DeJesus, 33, was at a Cleveland church in November 2018 planning her daughter's Quinceañera, a traditional Hispanic celebration of a girl's 15th birthday. The daughter saw two men in the parking lot trying to steal the van, prompting DeJesus and her husband, Jesus Cruz-Maldonado, to run outside to stop them, authorities said.

Preston drove away as the couple fought with him, dragging Cruz-Maldonado a short distance and then running over DeJesus, prosecutors said. Preston was later identified from DNA evidence found inside the van.

Messages seeking comment were left with Preston's attorneys on Tuesday.

Preston declined to speak at sentencing based on his attorneys' advice because he maintains his innocence, reported.