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TOP STORY

## Bicyclist struck on State Route 80 at Lavender Pit dies, police say

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Cyclist Sergio Lalli, seen here in downtown Bisbee last year, died Saturday from injuries suffered during a hit-and-run incident last week.

LYDA LONGA HERALD/REVIEW FILE

**BISBEE —** Criminal charges against a motorist who police say struck a bicyclist and fled the scene have been upgraded since the victim died.

Noe Jesus Smith is now charged with manslaughter in the death of Sergio Lalli, the Cochise County Attorney's Office said Tuesday.

Investigators said Smith struck Lalli as the victim rode his bicycle on the outer east lane of State Route 80 at the Lavender Pit on Friday afternoon. Smith left the scene and was arrested later in the day.

Lalli died Sunday and the 23-year-old Smith is now facing manslaughter, leaving the scene of an accident involving death and aggravated assault charges.

Smith, of Douglas, is scheduled to appear in Bisbee Justice Court on June 22 for a preliminary hearing, prosecutors said. His case will then likely be transferred to Cochise County Superior Court.

The defendant is being held at the Cochise County Jail.

Lalli was a local author listed in the "Local Authors" page on the city of Bisbee's website and an avid cyclist who was often seen riding his bicycle around Old Bisbee.

Lalli wrote six books, including one about mafioso Joseph Bonanno and a book titled "Sandals on the Ground, Minds in the Clouds: All About Jesus."

He also had his own YouTube channel that he used to interview various people in Bisbee whom he found interesting.

A handful of people commented on his passing on the Positively Bisbee Facebook page. A photo of Lalli inside Goar Park Lunches featured on the nonprofit's Facebook page lauded Lalli for his patronage.

"Rest in Peace Sergio Lalli, thank you for your support of Goar Park Lunches through the years, you inspired many of us with your active lifestyle and stamina, you will be missed," the post stated.

Amy Brett, a member of the Bisbee Arts Commission, agreed.

"I did not know Sergio Lalli, but I am saddened by this tragedy and I realize that he was a friend to many," Brett said in an email.

Investigators said Smith struck Lalli on Friday just after 1 p.m. on the outer east lane of SR 80 at The Lavender Pit. Smith took off from the scene, but was later arrested by police.

Investigators found his car abandoned a mile east of the scene, and after determining the identity of the driver, they went to Douglas and arrested Smith at his residence, Bisbee police investigators said. He was initially charged with leaving the scene of an accident with death or injury, failure to remain at the scene of an accident, aggravated assault causing serious injury, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, no valid driver's license and failure to pay a fine.

Court records show Smith was arrested in 2016 on traffic related violations that included speed greater than reasonable and no valid driver's license.

Lalli's bicycle was in two pieces at the scene Friday afternoon, one of the tires several feet from the mangled bike on the outer lane of the highway. Three Bisbee officers took measurements and diverted traffic.

The stretch of road where the crash occurred between Old Bisbee and the Lowell neighborhood of Bisbee has been problematic for years, as pedestrians and bicyclists have navigated their way along narrow sidewalks and roadways with no bike lanes.

Drivers often speed around the curves, even though the posted limit is between 35 and 40 mph at certain sections.

Bisbee city officials are studying a plan to build both a walkway and bicycle lane around SR 80 along the Lavender Pit that would take pedestrians and cyclists to and from Lowell and Old Bisbee.