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NEWS RELEASE
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DA'S OFFICE RELEASES THREE PUBLIC AWARENESS VIDEOS TO INFORM AND WARN ABOUT THE EXTREME DANGERS OF MANUFACTURING BUTANE HONEY OIL

RIVERSIDE – There is a dangerous and potentially deadly epidemic having an impact in Riverside County – explosions from the manufacturing of butane honey oil (BHO).

Today, July 18, 2017, Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin is announcing the release of three short public awareness videos to educate people about this extreme danger and to prevent future BHO lab explosions. The manufacture of BHO can cause injury or death not only to those doing the extraction, but also to innocent members of the community.

“People need to understand that the butane honey oil extraction process take lives -- it hurts people forever,” Hestrin said. “The reason we have produced these videos and why we need the public to see them, is because of the importance of getting the word out about the dangers of these substances and this extraction process.

“We want to put an end to the manufacture of butane honey oil,” Hestrin said.

One Sunday in February 2015, Selina Cervantes was sleeping in a room at the Knights Inn in Palm Springs. Her boyfriend, Alex Gonzales, was in the bathroom attempting to extract BHO for the first time and for his own personal use. Something sparked the extremely volatile and easily ignited butane, causing it to explode and the room – and those in it -- to catch fire. Alex was able to escape quickly and had second- and third-degree burns over 51 percent of his body. It took Selina less than a minute to get out but even in that short time the explosion and fire resulted in second- and third-degree burns over 97 percent of her body. A responding Palm Springs fire captain said he did not expect her to survive.

Selina did survive and now she and Alex, who are still together, share their horrific experience on these public awareness videos. Alex, who had no previous criminal record, was charged by the DA's Office in this case and entered a guilty plea. As part of his terms of probation negotiated by his defense attorney and the DA's Office, Alex agreed to participate in these videos produced by the DA's Office.

The videos are being marketed on social media, including YouTube, and will specifically target those searching for videos showing them how to extract and manufacture butane honey oil. They will be shown as “ads” before online BHO manufacturing videos in effort to educate those viewers and stop them before they attempt the extraction process.

Funding for the informational videos and the marketing campaign comes from the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA), totaling \$9,700.

The videos can be found on the DA's Office website (www.rivcoda.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rivcoda).

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