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Remaining charge dropped against mom in son's fatal hit-and-run case

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The Hennepin County attorney's office dropped charges Thursday against a Roseville woman accused of telling her son to get rid of the car involved in a fatal Dinkytown hit-and-run in April.

Diane Bakdash, 66, a former nurse, is now exonerated of the felony and misdemeanor charges filed against her in connection with the April 15 crash that killed University of Minnesota student Benjamin Van Handel.

Her son, Timothy Bakdash, is accused of first-degree murder for allegedly running down a group of college students, including Van Handel, as they walked home from a bar.

A felony charge of accomplice after the fact accused Diane Bakdash of telling her son to "get rid of the car that night." The felony

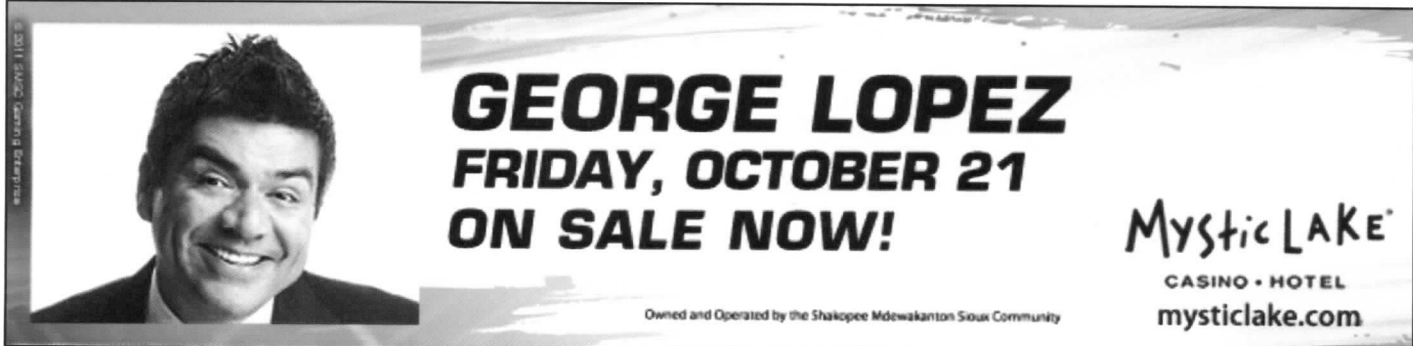
charge was dropped last month and she was charged with obstructing the legal process or arrest, a misdemeanor.

In Thursday's dismissal, the Hennepin County attorney's office said that Timothy Bakdash will testify that Diane Bakdash thought her son struck a deer with his car that night, and that her statements stemmed from him negotiating the sale of a vehicle. The state cannot prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Diane Bakdash knew otherwise, according to the dismissal signed by County Attorney Mike Freeman.

Diane Bakdash's attorney, Ryan Garry, said that his client is looking forward to getting her life back together since the charges were filed. She was fired from her job as a nurse practitioner and asked to stop practicing by the Minnesota Board of Nursing. She was shunned by her friends, he said, and asked to leave the gym where she was a member.

"I think she want to put this behind her and move on," Garry said. "This tells the public that this is an innocent woman charged with a crime she didn't commit, simple as that, and thankfully we had a prosecutor who recognized that and decided to dismiss the charges without making it go to trial."

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