



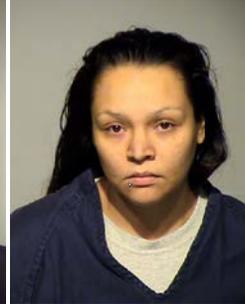
## Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office **NEWS RELEASE**

Fran McLaughlin  
Public Information Officer  
Cell: 414-254-9488  
Phone: 414-278-5226  
frances.mclaughlin@milwaukeecountywi.gov

Richard R. Schmidt  
Acting Sheriff

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 10, 2018

### Deputies Arrest Two in OWI Crash with 8 Children in Vehicle



Ellis Toms – 2015 photo    Amanda Martinez – 2016 photo

Milwaukee, WI – This morning at 1:40 a.m., deputies responded to a one-vehicle crash on I-43 Southbound at W. Fond du Lac Avenue. Upon arrival, deputies saw that the vehicle's air bags had deployed, and two adults were standing outside the minivan with eight children, ages 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Several of the children required medical treatment for minor injuries.

The driver, Amanda M. Martinez, age 30, of Milwaukee, also had a leg injury. A witness on the scene said the van passed him at a high rate of speed and suddenly veered sharply and drove straight into the freeway retaining wall. He heard the driver yelling at the passenger asking why he would yank on the wheel. Deputies spoke to several of the children who corroborated that the passenger, Ellis J. Toms, age 36, of Milwaukee, had been drinking in the car and arguing with Martinez.

One child said, "everybody was screaming for them to stop. When we got on the freeway he kept grabbing at the steering wheel. He grabbed it again and we crashed and then I blacked out."

Martinez performed poorly on standardized field sobriety tests, and tested .088 on a PBT. She was arrested for OWI-1<sup>st</sup> with Child Under 16 Years of Age in Vehicle, Disorderly Conduct, and 7 counts of Child Neglect. Only one child was restrained in a safety seat belt. She also received citations for Operate Without Valid License, and Operate Vehicle with No Insurance. She faces up to 6 years in prison, if convicted.

-more-

For more information about the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, visit our website at [www.mksheriff.org](http://www.mksheriff.org) and our facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/MilwaukeeCountySheriff>  
Follow us on Twitter @MCSOSheriff

Page - 2 -

**Toms was arrested for 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety (DV-related) and 7 counts of Child Neglect/Party to a Crime. He faces up to 15 years in prison, if convicted.**

**Sheriff Schmidt said, “It is unconscionable that two adults would drink to excess and take eight children in a vehicle with them. Their careless disregard for the safety of these children or anyone else on the road is appalling, and we will review this matter carefully and issue the most serious charges possible.”**

**Milwaukee Fire Department treated parties at the scene for their injuries, and Bell Ambulance conveyed the injured children to Children’s Hospital for treatment. A family member was contacted and the process for releasing the children to her was to begin when a CPS supervisor was expected to arrive at 7:00 a.m.**

**There is no squad dashcam or STOC video.**

###