

September 20, 2024  
For Immediate Release

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# Dad Who Drove off Cliff with Twin Girls in Car Sentenced to 31 Years in Prison

## *Robert Brians Guilty of Attempted Murder, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that Robert Brians, 51, who in a fit a rage amid a divorce and custody dispute, intentionally drove off Sunset Cliffs with his 2-year-old twin girls in the car has been sentenced to 31 years in state prison.

Brians pleaded guilty on August 9 to two counts of attempted murder, child abuse, kidnapping, domestic violence, and burglary. He had taken the children from his parents' home in the middle of the night before driving away, intent on killing the girls and himself.

“Attempting to kill your innocent children to hurt your spouse is beyond despicable,” DA Stephan said. “I am grateful to first responders who found this defendant’s whereabouts and were able to save the young girls from drowning. I’m also proud of our Family Protection Division for holding this defendant accountable for his unspeakable act.”

During a 2021 preliminary hearing, Jenna Brians testified that after Brians took the children, she exchanged several text messages with him as she tried to learn their whereabouts. At one point, Brians called Jenna on Facetime so she could say goodbye to the girls. Brians told her that he was planning to drive off a cliff in his truck while his girls were inside. One text message he sent read, “I told you, girls are going to Heaven and I’m going to Hell to wait for you.”

Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, stalking, or financial abuse. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, frighten, terrorize, injure, or wound someone.

If you or someone you know is being abused, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233. More resources can be found on [the District Attorney’s website](#).

In addition, One Safe Place: The North County Family Justice Center provides free support services all under one roof to anyone who has experienced child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, hate crime, elder abuse, human trafficking, violent loss, family violence, or other abuse or victimization. [OneSafePlaceNorth.org](#)

Deputy District Attorney Franciesca Balerio prosecuted this case.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*

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