

Woman tested positive for pot in crash that killed truck driver: NOPD

By Jonathan Bullington

NOLA.com | April 19, 2016

A 31-year-old woman was booked last week with negligent homicide after [New Orleans police](#) said she tested positive for marijuana following a November 2015 crash that killed a truck driver.

Police said Jessica Caroline Wells' judgment could have been "clouded" on the afternoon of Nov. 11, when she drove her red Nissan Altima onto Lakeshore Drive and into the path of an 18-wheeler driven by New Orleans native Keith Laurendine.

Laurendine, 53, has been carrying a large crane at the time of the crash. That crane shifted forward as Laurendine slammed on the brakes, crushing the truck cabin. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police said Wells was hospitalized following the crash. A female passenger in her car was uninjured. A blood sample taken from Wells during her hospitalization later came back positive for marijuana, police said.

"Based on the fact that Wells operated her vehicle in a reckless manner by attempting to execute a left turn from the right lane and directly into the path of the oncoming 18-wheeler, detectives believe Wells caused a chain of events which led to Laurendine's death," police said in a news release.

Wells was booked Thursday (April 14) with negligent homicide, court records show. Her bond was set at \$25,000. She could not be reached for comment late Tuesday afternoon.