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Minutes before fatal crash, 'driving drunk' text messages

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In the days leading up to the deadly crash, Mila Dago sent text messages typical of any 22-year-old enjoying life in Miami.

She planned a day at the beach with her circle of pals, talked hair styles with a girlfriend and hoped to watch a meteor shower light up the night sky.

But Dago, newly released police records show, was also in the midst of a nasty breakup with her boyfriend. And as she and friends barhopped in Miami in the early hours of Aug. 14, 2013, she fired off a barrage of angry text messages that finally culminated in horrifyingly prophetic words:

“Driving drunk woo ...” “Ill be dead thanks to you ...” “Lata”

Dago did not die. But three minutes after sending the last message, Miami-Dade prosecutors say, Dago blew through a red light near downtown Miami, plowing her tiny rented Smart Car into a moving truck and killing her own passenger and friend, Irina Reinoso, 22.

Dago's text messages, entered into evidence last week in the DUI manslaughter case against her, add a chilling twist to yet another Miami tragedy involving young people, booze and car crashes.

Her defense attorney, David Rothman, said: “Ms. Dago, who, with her family, prays every day for the young woman who passed and her family, believes it is disrespectful to the young woman's family to publicly comment.”

Dago, now 24, has pleaded not guilty to DUI manslaughter, vehicular homicide and two counts of DUI with damage to a person. No trial date has been set.

A civil lawsuit is still pending against Dago and Car2Go, the vehicle-sharing company from which she

rented the Smart Car.

Dago and Reinoso had only been friends a couple of months.

Raised in Kendall, Reinoso hoped to one day enter law enforcement. She studied at Miami Dade College with plans to transfer to Florida International University.

Reinoso played volleyball at Sunset High, took her mom to dance at Latin music concerts and fished with her father — just days before her death, he finally allowed to steer his boat.

“She was very family oriented, had an incredible heart and always had a smile on her face,” said her mother, Ivania Reinoso.

On the day before the crash, Irina Reinoso, Dago and some friends had gone to the beach. That night, Reinoso agreed to accompany Dago to Miami nightspots Blackbird Ordinary and Electric Pickle.

Throughout that night, according to the new evidence, Dago sent over 60 texts to her boyfriend, identified only as DJ, after they got into an argument that afternoon.

“Have a nice life idiot ... I’m tired of having to put you with your short temper and unreasonable attitude,” Dago wrote.

Later she added: “I’m done you ruined me ... you’ll be the death of me.”

Throughout the night, DJ barely responded. About 20 minutes before the crash, he finally wrote: “What you talking about your physco stop weirdo.”

As Dago sent her final texts, according to police, she was driving the 2012 Smart Car rented street-side from Car2Go. Reinoso was in the passenger’s seat.

At 4:44 a.m., the Smart Car, heading south on Biscayne Boulevard, blew through a red light at Northeast 15th Street. Driving through the intersection on the green light was Benjamin Byrum, 51, a produce importer who has just helped unload an early morning shipment of squash from North Carolina.

Dago’s speeding car T-boned Byrum’s Chevy pickup truck, knocking him unconscious. “The Smart Car is what saved me,” Byrum told the Miami Herald. “If it had been anything bigger, I would have been in trouble.”

Byrum wound up with nothing more than bumps and bruises. But Reinoso “showed no signs of life” — paramedics pronounced her dead at the scene.

A Miami police officer smelled “ an odor of alcohol” coming from Dago. Blood tests later revealed she had a blood alcohol content level of .178 — more than double the legal limit — nearly two hours after the crash, according to police.

After all the blood tests were finished, Miami police arrested Dago in January 2014. She has been free on bail awaiting trial since.

Since the crash, Reinoso’s relatives filed suit against her and Car2Go, saying the company should have safeguards in place to prevent drunk drivers from renting unattended cars on the street.

Car2Go believes federal law allows them to operate with the the same limited-liabilty that is enjoyed by rental car companies. The company has also pointed out the victim was not wearing a seat belt.

The Reinoso family’s lawyer, Ricardo Martinez-Cid, said the company should install an inexpensive breath test that does not allow drivers to operate the cars if they are inebriated.

“It’s been a very hotly contested case,” Martinez-Cid said. “We do believe we’re going to be successful in the case, helping to make Car2Go safer and getting justice for Irina’s parents.”