

Horror as another software engineer, 27, is horribly killed in huge crash with deadly Tesla

By [JAMES GORDON](#)

A talented software engineer was killed in a horrifying multi-car smash in downtown San Francisco with the crash also claiming the life of the couple's dog.

The horrific collision happened on Sunday evening as Mikhael 'Misha' Romanenko, 27, and his girlfriend, Linh Luu, were driving to pick up family members for a trip to the airport.

The pair was struck by a speeding **Tesla**, driven by 66-year-old Jia Lin Zheng who collided with their car after smashing into a Waymo robotaxi.

Seven others were also injured in the mangled wreckage that left shattered lives.

Luu, who survived the crash but suffered severe injuries including broken bones and a concussion, recounted the heartbreaking moments before the tragedy revealing how she had a haunting premonition.

'I remember looking over to him and saying, "I love you," and him saying, "love you too," back to me,' she told **ABC7**. 'Moments later, our lives changed forever.'

'I do have a flashback of when I was back in the car and he was motionless,' Luu said through tears. 'It was like, "Oh my God, Misha," and he wasn't responding. That's all I remember.'

Luu blacked out during the crash only to awaken in the hospital where she claims to have instinctively known the devastating truth that her boyfriend and dog had both died.

'You can feel their energy, and I didn't feel his. I couldn't feel Keeper,' she said, mourning the loss of the man she described as the love of her life.

'I feel like I'm in a really bad dream, and I'm trying to wake up from it so I can see him and hug him and tell him how horrible this nightmare is,' she said as she sobbed.

The couple had been planning their future together. 'He was a ball of joy - kind, smart, and romantic,' she said. 'He brought happiness to everyone around him.'

Despite her physical injuries, Luu left the hospital to attend Romanenko's funeral, determined to honor his memory.

'I want to live with a kind heart, just like him,' she said. 'He was my everything. He was a truly special person who left a mark on everyone he met.'

The Tesla driver, Jia Lin Zheng, was arrested on suspicion of felony vehicular manslaughter, reckless driving causing injury, and speeding.

While a blood alcohol screening conducted hours after the crash did not indicate alcohol in Zheng's system, authorities are investigating whether drugs or other factors were involved.

District Attorney Brooke Jenkins emphasized the importance of a thorough investigation.

'It is critical that we take the time to diligently comb through all of the evidence and gather as much information as possible so that we're able to make the correct charging decision,' she said in a statement.

Luu, alongside Romanenko's grieving family and friends, is demanding accountability. 'He took away a really, really great person,' she said. 'I want justice for Misha.' Romanenko's mother, Julia, has also spoken out expressing frustration over the city's increasingly dangerous roads.

'Something needs to be done. Just knowing how many car accidents and hit-and-runs there are, it is very hard to accept that it continues, leaving so many people in pain.

'It is a huge loss,' she said. 'He spread so much joy and laughter. We are getting so many recollections from friends and families who were touched by his love.'

His mother, who works as a hospice nurse, has helped countless families cope with loss - but she confessed that nothing could have prepared her for the sudden death of her youngest son.

'Knowing everything, it is still the hardest thing I have come across in my life,' she explained.

'He had so much left to give. He was loved by everyone who knew him, and now he's gone.'

Romanenko's death marked the city's second traffic fatality this year, while 2024 saw 41 lives lost to crashes, more than the city's 34 homicides during the same period.

The intersection of Sixth and Harrison, where the crash occurred, is a known hotspot for accidents.

'Something needs to be done,' Julia said to the [San Francisco Chronicle](#). 'Just knowing how many car accidents and hit-and-runs there are, it is very hard to accept that it continues, leaving so many people in pain.'

Friends and loved ones of Romanenko say they remember his smile, his compassionate heart, and the joy he brought to others.

A UC Irvine graduate with a degree in mathematics, Romanenko worked as a software engineer at a venture capital company in the Bay Area.

Aside from his professional achievements, Romanenko was an accomplished athlete and grew up swimming, cycling, running, and surfing.

He and his older brother often competed together in triathlons, forging bonds of brotherhood through their shared passion for endurance sports.

Those close to him described him as a 'ball of joy,' always eager to help others and bring positivity into the lives of everyone he met.

Luu and Romanenko's family are channeling their grief into preserving his memory, ensuring his legacy of kindness and love continues to inspire.