



SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE DISTRICT ATTORNEY RACHAEL ROLLINS

Press Office

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Trooper Indicted in 2018 Shooting on I-93 South

BOSTON, September 18, 2019 — A Suffolk County Grand Jury today returned indictments charging Massachusetts State Police Trooper MATTHEW SHEEHAN, with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and assault with a dangerous weapon, for firing a semi-automatic rifle at an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and injuring the operator on February 24, 2018.

At the time of the shooting, Trooper Sheehan was acting in his capacity as a law enforcement officer as State Police and other law enforcement agencies attempted to corral a group of individuals on ATVs and dirt bikes. Members of the group were operating in a reckless manner on Interstate 93 South. The police had activated their lights and positioned their vehicles in a manner to contain the group. Trooper Sheehan was the only law enforcement officer, of the 13 who were present, who fired his weapon.

Trooper Sheehan used his department-issued semi-automatic rifle that he retrieved from his cruiser just prior to the encounter. He chose to fire that semi-automatic weapon and not the handgun that he and all officers carry on their hip.

During the course of an extensive investigation, Suffolk County prosecutors and State Police detectives assigned to the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office determined Trooper Sheehan fired two rounds. One of the bullets entered the side of the ATV's tire, not the front. The angle at which the bullet struck the tire indicates the ATV was parallel to Trooper Sheehan, not heading towards him, thus not presenting the imminent danger that would permit the use potentially deadly force in self-defense.

"Every day I have the honor of working with law enforcement officers who uphold the law and keep our communities safe," said District Attorney Rachael Rollins. "Members of law enforcement have a special role in society and overwhelmingly, these officers serve with distinction, courage and compassion

for the communities they protect. Unfortunately, there are a small number whose actions are unacceptable and, as we allege here, criminal.”

With respect to the individuals who were operating their ATVs and dirt bike recklessly, eight individuals were arrested. Seven of those eight individuals arrested have been prosecuted and their cases resolved; one case remains pending in the Central Division of Boston Municipal Court. “They are being held accountable,” District Attorney Rollins said. “The actions of these individuals should not have prompted a trained law enforcement professional to respond with deadly force, as we allege.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank my staff who have led this investigation, as well as the members of the Suffolk County State Police Detective Unit,” District Attorney Rollins said. “This investigation was thorough and resulted in the right charging decision.”

Additional information about the allegations against Matthew Sheehan will be provided during his arraignment in the Magistrate’s Session of Suffolk Superior Court on October 10, 2019.

All defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.