

Two Massachusetts State Troopers Agree to Plead Guilty in Overtime Abuse Investigation

One suspended Massachusetts State Police Trooper and one retired Trooper have agreed to plead guilty this week in connection with the ongoing investigation of overtime abuse at the Massachusetts State Police (MSP).

Eric Chin, 46, of Hanover, a suspended Trooper, and Paul Cesan, 50, of Southwick, a retired Trooper, were each charged in an Information with one count of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds. Both have agreed to plead guilty pursuant to a plea agreement, but dates have not yet been scheduled for the hearing.

Chin and Cesan were MSP Troopers assigned to Troop E, which was responsible for enforcing criminal and traffic regulations along the Massachusetts Turnpike, Interstate I-90. In 2016, Chin earned \$302,400, which included approximately \$131,653 in overtime pay. In 2016, Cesan earned \$163,533, which included approximately \$50,866 in overtime pay.

According to the charging documents, Chin and Cesan were paid for overtime shifts that they did not work at all or from which they left early. Each is alleged to have concealed their scheme by submitting fraudulent citations designed to create the appearance that they had worked overtime hours that they had not, and, falsely claimed in MSP paperwork and payroll entries that they had worked the entirety of their overtime shifts.

Chin has agreed to plead guilty to collecting \$7,125 for overtime hours that he did not work, and Cesan has agreed to

plead guilty to collecting \$29,287 for overtime hours that he did not work.

The overtime in question involved the Accident and Injury Reduction Effort program (AIRE) and the "X-Team" initiative, which were intended to reduce accidents, crashes, and injuries on I-90 through an enhanced presence of MSP Troopers who were to target vehicles traveling at excessive speeds.

In 2016, MSP received annual benefits from the U.S. Department of Transportation in excess of \$10,000, which were funded pursuant to numerous federal grants.

Chin and Cesan are the fourth and fifth Troopers to plead guilty as a result of the ongoing investigation. On Oct. 11, 2018, suspended Trooper Gary Herman, 45, of Chester, pleaded guilty; on July 2, 2018, former Trooper Gregory Raftery, 47, of Westwood pleaded guilty; and on Sept. 14, 2018, suspended Trooper Kevin Sweeney, 40, of Braintree pleaded guilty. On June 27, 2018, former Lieutenant David Wilson, 57, of Charlton was arrested and charged with the same crime, and on July 25, 2018, retired Trooper Daren DeJong, 56, of Uxbridge, was also charged.

Pursuant to the plea agreement with Chin, the government will recommend a sentence of between six and 12 months of incarceration. Pursuant to the plea agreement with Cesan, the government will recommend a sentence of between 10 and 16 months of incarceration. The charge of theft of government funds provides for a sentence of no greater than 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; and Douglas Shoemaker,

Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Dustin Chao, Mark Grady, and Neil Gallagher of Lelling's Public Corruption Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the court documents are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Cumberland Farms employee arrested for stealing \$3,400 worth of lottery tickets

On Thursday, October 18, at about 11:15 a.m., Wareham Police responded to Cumberland Farms on Depot Street for a report of an employee stealing lottery tickets. Upon arrival, it was reported that an employee had stolen approximately \$3,400 worth of lottery tickets in the last four weeks.

Officer Jon Verhaegen arrested Matthew Christianson, 28, of New Bedford for larceny over \$1,200. He was transported to police headquarters where he was booked prior to being sent to Wareham District Court for arraignment.

New Bedford Man charged with cocaine trafficking, detectives take more than 19 grams off street

Members of the New Bedford Police Department narcotics unit made an arrest and took more than 19 grams of cocaine off the street Thursday, Oct. 18 following an investigation into a cocaine distribution service out of a McGurk St. apartment.

Detectives executed a search warrant and located the target of the warrant, Jesus Jimenez-Lopez, in a vehicle. A subsequent search of the residence yielded more than 19 grams of cocaine, a digital scale, packaging materials and more than \$300 in cash.

Detectives arrested Jesus Jimenez-Lopez, 25, of New Bedford, on charges of unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and trafficking in cocaine. The arrest was made at 7:13 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 18.

Everett Man Pleads Guilty to Scheme to Defraud Massachusetts Unemployment Assistance of \$1.8 million

An Everett man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in

Boston in connection with a scheme to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance of more than \$1.8 million.

Edison Delarosa, 53, pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud and one count of wire fraud. U.S. Senior District Court Judge George A. O'Toole Jr. scheduled sentencing for Jan. 24, 2019. In February 2017, Delarosa was arrested and charged and subsequently released on conditions.

From approximately January 5 through November 24, 2016, Delarosa engaged in a scheme to defraud the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by exploiting the Department of Unemployment Assistance's (DUA) online system, which allows claimants to manage their unemployment insurance accounts over the internet. On multiple occasions, Delarosa, who did not actually owe DUA any money, submitted bogus "repayments" online, which triggered the release of "refund" checks payable to him in varying amounts. During the course of the scheme, Delarosa submitted a total of 136 fraudulent "repayments," amounting to \$1,813,170, for which DUA issued him 15 paper "refund" checks, totaling \$1,251,283. DUA uncovered the scheme after six of those checks, totaling \$27,227, were mailed to Delarosa and deposited into his account.

The charges of wire fraud and mail fraud provide for a sentence of no greater than 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Michael Mikulka, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, New York Region; Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; and Joseph W. Cronin, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, made the announcement today. The Commonwealth of

Massachusetts' Department of Unemployment Assistance cooperated with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Anne Paruti of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

New Bedford Repeated Illegal Gun User Sentenced to 5-7 Years in State Prison

A 34-year-old repeat illegal firearm user who was once again carrying an illegal gun during a fight outside a bar in New Bedford was sentenced to serve five to seven years in state prison yesterday in Fall River Superior Court, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Christopher Fernandes, of New Bedford, pleaded guilty to a two-count indictment charging him with carrying an illegal firearm-subsequent offense and unlawful possession of ammunition.

On August 20, 2016 at approximately 12:45am New Bedford Police responded to a large fight outside of Tony's Bar on County Street. At least two different groups of males were involved in the altercation. The defendant, who was part of one of the two groups was noted to be extremely agitated and was making threats to shoot. When the defendant turned away from officers to hurry away from the scene, an officer saw the outline of a gun in his rear waistband. The defendant then began running from the area and struggled with police officers who were attempting to subdue him. At that time a .45 caliber handgun fell from his waist. The gun was loaded with six rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber.

This defendant had been previously convicted of an assault with a firearm and has recently been released from prison after serving a three year sentence.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jeanne Veenstra and the state prison sentence was handed down by Judge Renee Dupuis.

“This defendant has already served jail time for possession of an illegal firearm. Nothing but trouble will come from the defendant roaming the streets with a loaded gun. He continues to be a danger to the community and the public must be protected from him,” District Attorney Quinn said.

Law enforcement dive unit recover gun from Sunday night shooting in Onset

On Wednesday, October 17, at about 8:30 a.m. Wareham Police Detectives and the South Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (SEMLEC) Dive Unit investigated the water underneath the Point Independence Bridge for evidence.

Detectives developed information that the firearm used in the Sunday night shooting incident on West Boulevard was thrown from the bridge by the suspect as he fled the area. As a result, the SEMLEC Dive Unit was summoned and shortly after their arrival, the gun was located. The gun was found to be loaded and was taken into evidence by Wareham Police detectives.

On Sunday, October 14, at about 10:15 p.m. Wareham police

officers responded to the area of West Boulevard for a report of a shooting in the street. Further information was that there was an altercation involving several individuals and a suspect fired a gun from a dark colored auto before fleeing the scene.

Officers determined no one was struck by gunfire and the shooting was the result of an argument with a resident of West Boulevard. Detectives were able to identify a shooter and located a spent cartridge near the corner of Eighth Street and West Boulevard which was collected as evidence.

Wareham police officers went to the suspect's home in Middleboro, accompanied by Middleboro Police. After investigation, Zachary Blondheim, 21, of Middleboro was placed under arrest and transported back to Wareham Police headquarters where he was held on \$10,000 cash bail.



He will be arraigned in Wareham District Court on Monday morning. Mr. Blondheim is charged as follows;

- Assault with a dangerous weapon.
- Discharging a firearm with 500' of a dwelling.
- Carrying a firearm while loaded without a license.
- Possession of ammunition without an FID card.

Acting Police Chief John Walcek praised his officers for quickly identifying the shooter and making an arrest. He said, "As the result of good police work, the suspected shooter was identified and placed in custody less than 2 hours of the initial incident." He also said, "While the primary suspect was arrested, this remains an active and open investigation."

New Bedford man allegedly violently assaults, robs two in Wareham

On Wednesday, October 17, at about 2:00 a.m., Wareham Police Officers responded to an address on Main Street for a reported disturbance coming from a second-floor apartment. Upon the arrival of officers, they found it to be quiet, however at that time two individuals came into the police station reporting they had just been attacked at the same Main Street location.

One of the victims reported that he had been choked unconscious by an attacker, while his female companion was pushed back and \$800.00 was stolen from her pocket. The female victim reported that she was pushed with such extreme force that she came out of her sneakers. The attacker fled the scene and the male victim regained consciousness, before going to the police station.

Wareham EMS was summoned; however, the victims refused medical assistance. Acting Sergeant Kevin Reilly, Officers Christopher Corner, and Aaron Pacheco were able to identify the attacker as Jason Denwood, 39, of Myrtle Street, New Bedford. Multiple locations were checked for him, however, midnight shift officers not able to locate Mr. Denwood and a warrant for his arrest was applied for.

Later, at about 10:45 a.m. Wareham Police detectives located Denwood in the Woods at Wareham complex and he was placed under arrest without incident. The detectives were assisted by members of the Patrol Division during the arrest. Jason Denwood is charged as follows;

- Unarmed Robbery
- Assault and Battery
- Strangulation

Mr. Denwood was processed at Police Headquarters and transported to the Wareham District Court for arraignment.

Acting Police Chief John Walcek said, "This was not a random assault and robbery. As a result of the cooperative efforts of both patrol officers and detectives the suspect was placed under arrest."

Police arrest New Bedford Captain with extra 150-pounds of scallops, Oxycontin

On Wednesday, October 10, a Massachusetts Environmental Police Officer conducted a commercial permit inspection aboard a

scallop vessel in New Bedford. The vessel was found to be permitted federally but did not possess a valid commercial permit to land scallops in Massachusetts.

The Officer then requested the Captain display his catch of scallops to ensure compliance of the federally permitted possession limits. The Captain presented the Officer with the vessel's allowable catch of 600-pounds; however, further inspection of the vessel located an additional 150-pounds of scallops concealed within a beverage cooler.

The catch was seized and the vessel Captain was subsequently arrested for failure to display fish/catch upon demand. During the arrest process he was also found to be in possession of Oxycontin without a prescription.

New Bedford police warn of people breaking into unlocked cars

From the New Bedford Police Department's Facebook page:

"We have received reports of several auto breaks in the last few days, with items stolen, and in all cases, the doors were UNLOCKED. Please everyone: Lock your car doors! Car theft is generally a crime of opportunity and many thieves check door handles and move on if the vehicle is locked. So lock out those thieves! It's just a click of the remote."

Judge deems New Bedford rape suspect a danger, releases him on \$1,000 bail anyway

New Bedford Police arrested Hector J. Mejias, 23, of New Bedford, on charges of two counts of rape and sexual conduct for a fee. The arrest was made at 12:38 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 7.

The district attorney's office requested that he be held without bail and sought a dangerousness hearing, which was held Wednesday, Oct. 10.

Judge Edward F. X. Lynch found Mejias a danger but released him on \$1,000 cash bail, ordered him to wear a GPS monitoring device, placed him on a curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. and ordered him to have no contact with the victim. Mejias made bail and is free. A probable cause hearing is set for Nov. 16.