



Bruins 3, Penguins 4, Final

State trooper charged with OUI in Chicopee crash told investigators 'I'm sorry,' court records show

By [Travis Andersen](#) and [Matt Rocheleau](#) Globe Staff, August 14, 2019, 1:36 p.m.

An off-duty State Police trooper who was [allegedly drunk when he crashed his pickup truck](#) into another vehicle in Chicopee last month smelled of alcohol after the incident and told a responding officer, “You got to help us both out. We’re both Troopers,” according to court filings.

The information was contained in an incident report filed in Chicopee District Court, where Trooper Jason Maurice Welch, 35, is to be arraigned Sept. 5 on charges of operating under the influence of liquor causing serious bodily injury, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, operating under the influence of liquor, and failure to take care in stopping.

Welch’s lawyer couldn’t immediately be reached for comment.

State Police said last week that Welch was “initially placed on restricted duty, and has not yet returned to work. An Internal Affairs case was opened at that time. In light of the pending criminal charges that resulted from the MSP investigation, the Department will hold another hearing for that member and expects to further amend his duty status. That amended status will remain in effect for the duration of the judicial proceedings, following which his status will be re-evaluated based on the results of those proceedings and the separate Internal Affairs investigation.”

The incident report authored by State Police Lieutenant Adam Hakkarainen said the crash occurred shortly before 2:45 a.m. on July 21, when Welch, with another trooper as his passenger, drove a Ford F150 into the back end of a Ford Expedition stopped at a red light on Interstate 291 in Chicopee.

Data from Welch's Airbag Control Module in his truck showed he was driving 58 mph just before the crash in a 40 mph zone and made "no attempt at braking before the crash," Hakkarainen wrote.

The driver of the Expedition, Megan O'Brien, 33, suffered a "hematoma on her left elbow and upper arm" and told investigators, " 'Before I could move out of the way they plowed into me from behind,' " the report said.

O'Brien's passenger, Thomas Shea, 34, suffered more serious injuries.

Hakkarainen wrote that he spoke with Shea about three hours after the crash as Shea "was lying face up on a hospital bed. He was obviously in a lot of pain, evidenced by periodic moaning. His eyes were open at times, and he would appear to fall asleep. I observed that they were glassy in appearance. He was wearing a cervical collar."

According to the report, Shea texted O'Brien the afternoon after the crash and informed her that he "broke two vertebrae in his spine, but he was not paralyzed as a result."

Welch's passenger at the time of the crash, off-duty Trooper Timothy Stone, was also injured.

"He indicated that he had a dislocated hip and he had a laceration to his left leg," Hakkarainen wrote of Stone.

Hakkarainen also included comments from Chicopee police Officer Przemyslaw Szura, the first officer who had responded to the crash.

“He stated, ‘I’ll never forget that accident as long as I live! There was debris everywhere,’ ” Hakkarainen wrote. “He indicated that the rear end of the Ford Expedition had been destroyed from the accident.”

The report said Szura added, “ ‘The second I got to the accident scene, I could smell the beer.’ . . . He stated, ‘I hate to throw another guy under the bus, but both of them were cocked.’ The driver stated to him, ‘You got to help us both out. We’re both Troopers.’ Officer SZURA stated to WELCH, ‘You got to be [expletive] kidding me!’ Officer SZURA immediately requested a supervisor respond.”

Testing done at the hospital showed Welch had a high blood alcohol reading at the time of the crash.

“Dr. Elizabeth SANTONE indicated in her notes that ‘The patient was driving drunk, He [Jason WELCH] had no recollection of the event, but states he feels like an idiot,’ ” the report said. “She noted that labs taken from samples obtained from Jason WELCH showed Ethanol 255. . . . The lab results showed ‘Ethanol, Serum or Plasma 255 mg/dL A.’ ” Welch also suffered two rib fractures, records show.

Welch spoke briefly with investigators in an examination room at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield about four hours after the crash, according to Hakkarainen’s report.

“He appeared emotional as I spoke, his eyes tearing up,” the report said. “I advised him of his Miranda Warning. He indicated that he understood. When I asked him what happened, he requested to speak to a lawyer. I did not question him further. I observed that there was a moderate odor of an alcoholic beverage emanating from his person and in the room that was not in the room prior to his arrival. I observed that his eyes were bloodshot and glassy. As he asked me about his girlfriend, I noticed that he spoke with a thick tongue and his speech was slurred. In my opinion Jason WELCH was intoxicated.”

Welch also expressed remorse when he was informed he would be charged criminally.

“I handed him a criminal summons on Citation #R5945456 and explained the summons to him,” Hakkarainen wrote. “I read the criminal charges to him, which included the following: OUI Alcohol (90/24), Operating Recklessly to Endanger (90/24) and Failure to Use Care in Stopping (720CMR 9.06). He spontaneously stated, ‘I’m sorry.’ ”

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