 Bruins 3, Penguins 4, Final

With one leader arrested and his successor facing recall, turmoil engulfs the powerful state troopers' union

By [Andrea Estes](#) and [Matt Rocheleau](#) Globe Staff, August 28, 2019, 11:10 a.m.



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF/GLOBE STAFF

When FBI agents [arrested](#) Dana Pullman last week on charges that he stole from the troopers he was supposed to represent, one top FBI official compared the former president of the State Police Association of Massachusetts to “an old-school mob boss.”

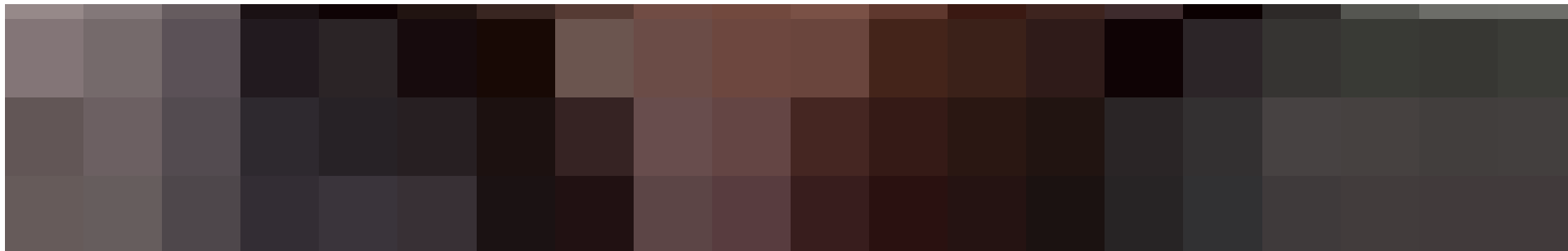
While union members may have been distressed at their one-time leader’s alleged betrayal, few questioned the tough-talking Pullman’s effectiveness as an advocate for SPAM, one of the most powerful labor groups in the state.

But that is exactly what’s happening to Pullman’s successor, who was supposed to rebuild SPAM’s reputation following Pullman’s resignation last year. More than 500 union members have signed a petition calling for the removal of Sergeant Mark Lynch, saying, essentially, that he isn’t up to the job.

“It is the responsibility of the President to act on behalf of the membership, keep the membership informed and work with the administration on work-related matters,” says the petition. “This has not been happening.”







Mark Lynch. HANDOUT

The campaign to oust Lynch, scheduled for a vote on Sept. 18, is part of the [mounting turmoil](#) that has engulfed the 1,900-member union since revelations last year that troopers had been writing phony tickets and falsifying time sheets to boost their overtime pay. So far, 46 troopers have been implicated, including eight who have pleaded guilty to embezzlement.

In addition, the union's lobbyist, [Anne Lynch](#), was arrested on the same day as Pullman on charges that she paid kickbacks to Pullman in exchange for lucrative business referrals. And, in July, union treasurer Andrew Daly, who was in charge of the union's spending, abruptly resigned. Daly declined to comment.

Adding to the unrest, the union is locked in tense negotiations with the Office of Employee Relations over a new contract. And troopers are suing to block a [plan](#) aimed at preventing overtime abuse: installing GPS devices on their cruisers to track their movements. The union believes the use of GPS should be negotiated with the union.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Dennis Galvin, a retired State Police major, who heads the Massachusetts Association for Professional Law Enforcement, an independent police advocacy group.

Pullman's arrest, he said, was a sign of "deep-seated problems" at the powerful union and should be a "wake-up call for everyone to reassess what they're doing and what their responsibilities are."

Sergeant Patrick Foley, who organized the recall effort, handed the petition directly to Lynch, according to a friend of Lynch.

“He said it wasn’t personal, but the troops were angry and frustrated and hadn’t been kept in the loop,” the friend said. Foley declined to comment.

Lynch initially agreed to a sit-down interview with The Boston Globe last week but backed out Monday after meeting with his executive board. Instead, he issued this statement:

“The State Police Association of Massachusetts is moving forward to continue to support and serve the men and women of the Massachusetts State Police, who selflessly serve the citizens of the Commonwealth 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We will not comment on any pending criminal investigations or allegations as we vigorously believe that all people deserve due process and are innocent until proven guilty.”

Allies of Lynch believe that some of the push for his ouster may be motivated by loyalty to Pullman, a [larger-than-life figure](#) known for his profanity-laced tirades and take-no-prisoners style in six years as union president.



Dana Pullman, former president of the State Police Association of Massachusetts, left the Moakley Federal Courthouse after an afternoon hearing on Aug. 20. JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF/GLOBE STAFF

Pullman's lawyer, Martin G. Weinberg, called the former union boss "the most successful president in union history," and insisted that Pullman never "acted in a manner that violated either the federal criminal law or the best interests of SPAM."

By contrast, Lynch has deliberately kept a low profile. While Pullman frequently spoke out publicly when his members were accused of wrongdoing, Lynch has made virtually no public statements since becoming SPAM president [Oct. 1](#) — even as member after member were convicted of overtime abuse.

And while Pullman was a powerful presence on Beacon Hill, Lynch is not. Pullman encouraged board members to donate to politicians. Those donations may have helped solidify the union's clout with political leaders, observers said. However, state campaign records show, those donations virtually ended when Pullman stepped down.

Lynch, who sees himself as a reformer, became president at the request of three union executive board members precisely because he was not a Pullman ally, according to one Lynch associate. He said in a statement last week that he has worked quietly behind the scenes, cleaning up the union's finances and putting accounting safeguards and processes in place. He said he replaced union vendors, including lobbyist Anne Lynch (no relation) — long before she faced criminal charges.

He didn't take public credit for those actions — disclosing that he had fired Lynch, for example, only after Pullman and Lynch were charged.

Lynch's defenders say he does communicate with members, though in a different way than Pullman. They say Lynch sent more memos to union members, called Spam-O-Grams, in his one year as president than Pullman did in six.

Many members were taken aback by the charges against Pullman last week, even though he had [resigned](#) under a cloud of suspicion in 2018. Despite their loyalty to the union leader, some were quick to condemn his alleged actions.

“I want to say on record that while Dana has every right to defend himself, I am absolutely outraged at the allegations in the FBI Affidavit,” wrote one new board member, who asked not to be identified because he does undercover work, in a memo to some union members. “If what is alleged is true, every SPAM member should also be equally outraged . . . You have an absolute right to expect more than that from all of us who have been elected to represent you.”

Added another trooper:

“The majority of the people saw him as a good advocate for the union.,” but were “pissed off when they found out what happened . . . Everyone, myself included, expected more of him.”

Federal court [records](#) made clear that Pullman occasionally clashed with treasurer Daly over spending choices — but Pullman got his way.

Prosecutors said that when Daly learned that Pullman was planning to pay Anne Lynch’s firm \$350,000 for her work on a \$22 million settlement with the state to compensate troopers who worked on their days off, he told Pullman the union was “getting screwed.”

Pullman pounded on the table, screaming profanities, the federal complaint says.

Yet Daly was a close ally of Pullman, and rarely, if ever, told him no, according to someone familiar with their conversations.

Lynch will get a sense of his standing among troopers this week when they are scheduled to vote on whether to stop paying Pullman's legal bills. While many troopers want to end the payments, some want to keep making them. When the union membership voted last year to pay board members' legal fees through any trial, Lynch was among the few who voted not to keep paying a trooper's legal fees through trial, said a Lynch associate.

Whatever troopers think about other SPAM leaders, Lynch is the one on the hot seat now, overseeing long-stalled contract talks and waiting to learn whether he can keep his job.

State officials made a formal contract offer to the union recently, but the union executive board voted unanimously to reject it, according to the union representative's memo.

The offer, due to go before the full membership for a vote later this week, offered a 2 percent annual raise — but only if members agreed to accept GPS on their cruisers and to wear body cameras.

And on Sept. 18, Lynch will learn his fate — and the recall rules don't work in his favor. Only 150 troopers need to show up to vote, according to a Lynch ally. Two-thirds of them would need to vote to remove him. That means Lynch could lose his job based on the wishes of only 100 of the State Police union's 1,932 members.

“There will be a roomful of angry troopers,” predicted one observer, who said Lynch is in danger of losing his job. “For the last year there have been nothing but punches against the State Police. No one has been fighting for them . . . I think they want a fighter. Dana was a fighter.”

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