



Cape May County Prosecutor's Office

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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2007

Cape May Court House - Cape May County Prosecutor Robert L. Taylor announced that the Cape May County Grand Jury returned an indictment today charging New Jersey State Trooper Robert Higbee with two (2) counts of Death by Auto (Vehicular Homicide) under NJSA 2C:11-5, second degree crimes, involving a September fatal motor vehicle collision in Upper Township, New Jersey. The Trooper's vehicle struck a minivan resulting in the death of Upper Township sisters Jacqueline Becker, 17 years old, and Christina Becker, 19 years old.

An exhaustive joint investigation, conducted by members of the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office and the New Jersey State Police was initiated as a result of the fatal crash that occurred on September 27, 2006 at the intersection of Stagecoach Road (CR667) and Old Tuckahoe Road (CR631) in Marmora, New Jersey.

Data from the Powertrain Control Module, commonly referred to as a "black box", was retrieved from the Trooper's vehicle and was critical in determining the outcome of the investigation. This data, retrieved by Ford Motor Company, was received by the Prosecutor's Office during the first week in January 2007. The Powertrain Control Module contained approximately twenty-five seconds of data showing vehicle speed, percentage of accelerator pedal rotation, braking and engine RPMs, and other information up to the time of the collision.

In addition, new witnesses continued to come forward and were interviewed as late as January 28, 2007.

Motor vehicle summons' were issued to Trooper Robert Higbee in October 2006 for violation of Title 39:4-144, Failure to Stop or Yield Right of Way and 39:4-97, Careless Driving due to statute of limitations requiring motor vehicle summons' to be issued prior to thirty days from the date of the crash. The summons' will be handled by the Prosecutor's Office in conjunction with the pending criminal charges.

Persons convicted of a second degree crime may be incarcerated between five and ten years in the New Jersey State Prison system.