



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA  
DAILY CLIPS***

***August 25, 2017***

**MEDIA OUTLET:** Sun Sentinel

**HEADLINE:** Deputy on trial over reckless driving charge from 104 mph on-duty crash that seriously injured other driver

**BYLINE:** Marc Freeman

**LINK:** <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/palm-beach/fl-pn-deputy-reckless-driving-trial-preview-20170823-story.html>

**STORY:** Brandon Hegele weaved his Ford sedan in and out of mid-day traffic on busy Southern Boulevard, reaching 104 mph while changing lanes nine times before a violent crash that seriously hurt another driver.

Hegele wasn't just any motorist in a big hurry — he was an on-duty deputy behind the wheel of a marked Palm Beach County Sheriff's cruiser on May 27, 2016.

But he was driving without using his lights and sirens, while allegedly disregarding the commands of two supervisors to "hang back" and not pursue a suspect Toyota with Kentucky plates.

Now the 13-year veteran deputy faces a trial set to begin Monday.

Crash victim Harry Deshommes, 61, now resides in an assisted living facility and is unable to attend the trial, says his younger sister, Gina Desrouleaux. He spent a few months in the hospital after the crash into the rear of his small Smart brand car.

Desrouleaux said her brother then was in a rehabilitation center until April, learning how to talk, walk with a cane, and eat again after suffering a traumatic brain injury, fractured skull, broken back, broken left arm, broken ribs, broken pelvis, and surgery to take out his spleen.

"Harry was like Humpty Dumpty," Desrouleaux told the Sun Sentinel, referring to the nursery rhyme egg man that falls and crashes into bits. "He was broken. He suffered as anyone would have, and his life will never be the same."

Hegele, 34, is charged with reckless driving causing serious bodily injury. It's a third-degree felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

Seeking justice

Deshommes doesn't remember the crash or where he was headed to before it happened, said his sister. She and her husband had lived with Deshommes in their Royal Palm Beach home until the crash.

Deshommes, who moved from his native Haiti to South Florida in 2000, had been healthy and was looking for work after a previous job as a Macy's clerk, Desrouleaux said.

seriously injured. A Palm Beach County Sheriff's deputy, Brandon Hegele, is charged with reckless driving causing serious bodily injury in the crash. (Courtesy, Gina Desrouleaux)

"I just want justice to be served," she said, calling Hegele "a police officer who has total disregard for the law."

Desrouleaux says she was upset to learn it wasn't the deputy's first crash that got him in trouble at work.

Hegele was placed on unpaid leave four months after the crash, the latest in a series of disciplinary actions over his conduct behind the wheel, documents show.

That includes a suspension and a reprimand over two prior rear-end car crashes, including one that left another driver with back and shoulder injuries, according to Internal Affairs records provided by the sheriff's office. In 2013, he signed a "last chance agreement" to keep his job after a captain recommended firing him for failing to maintain his service weapon. Hegele was then suspended for three weeks.

But all of that background, as well as the sheriff's official policy on vehicle pursuits, will not be shared with the jury. Under Florida law, evidence of a policy violation can't be used to help prove a crime occurred.

So the only focus of the trial is "about what happened during that incident," Palm Beach County Circuit Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer said during an Aug. 15 hearing.

However, over the defense's objections, the jurors will hear a recording of the commands from Hegele's bosses. And the judge also blocked Hegele's lawyer from sharing with the jury that other deputies around Wellington also were speeding to locate the suspect car.

#### Violent crash

The episode began when deputies were advised to look for a car that had been involved in a violent felony under investigation by Village of Palm Springs police.

Deputies began to follow the car, but a supervisor advised to "break it off" and stop the pursuit. Two more commands to "hang back" followed, court records show.

Beach County courtroom during an Aug. 15, 2017 pre-trial hearing in his case. (WPEC-TV/Channel 12) But Hegele, driving on Southern Boulevard, continued to look for the Toyota after it had been spotted in the area.

According to an arrest report, Hegele drove more than twice the posted 50 mph speed limit for two and a half miles, repeatedly changing lanes to pass other vehicles heading westbound. He used his lights and sirens only to go through red traffic signals.

At about 3:13 p.m., under sunny skies, Deshommes made a U-turn on Southern to head west and started to change lanes.

Less than 1,000 feet away, Hegele's cruiser was moving at an estimated 152 feet per second. The deputy slammed on the brakes and steered to the right, but couldn't avoid the collision, an investigator's report said.

The Smart car flipped before landing upright, east of Cleary Road. Deshommes required months of medical treatment, while Hegele had minor injuries from the impact.

## The prosecution

Assistant State Attorney Marci Rex is planning to show the jury a dash cam video of the crash, which she says was caused by Hegele's "willful or wanton" disregard for the safety of others on the road.

"There was no need to be driving 104 miles per hour," Rex said at the recent hearing.

"Obviously police officers can speed ... this was not one of those circumstances," she explained. "He was not supposed to be chasing anybody. He was not engaged in an active pursuit. He was choosing to disregard the commands, to go well over the speed limit, weaving in and out of traffic, not using lights and sirens ... that is why he is being charged with a crime."

Defense attorney Scott Richardson argued the commands from the supervisors shouldn't be allowed in the trial. He said the commands are essentially "verbal pronouncements" of the written policy on pursuing suspects that is not permitted as evidence.

The jurors "aren't naïve" and will infer that Hegele did something wrong when they hear the directives, Richardson said.

But the judge said she doesn't believe the jury would make a "logical leap" that the commands are based on a policy.

Schosberg Feuer delayed ruling on a request by the prosecutor to prevent the jury from hearing Hegele, after the crash, asking about the other driver's condition.

Rex says the remark showing possible remorse serves only to elicit sympathy for the deputy.

"It's not an expression of remorse," Richardson responded. "It's an expression of concern."

**MEDIA OUTLET:** NBC Miami (Channel 6)

**HEADLINE:** Pembroke Pines Resumes Red Light Camera Recording Starting Friday

**BYLINE:** Marc Freeman

**LINK:** <http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/Pembroke-Pines-Resumes-Red-Light-Camera-Recording-Starting-Friday-441606413.html>

**STORY:** If you run a red light at several intersections in Pembroke Pines, police say you should be prepared to have your picture taken – and get a hefty fine.

The city is reinstating its Red Light Camera Safety Program starting Friday. A warning period existed from August 1st to the 24th, but officers say the cameras will be on and recording from the 25th on.

The cameras will be installed at the following intersections:

Eastbound Johnson Street and Colony Point Drive  
Northbound Flamingo Road and Pines Boulevard  
Eastbound Pines Boulevard and Flamingo Road  
Westbound Pines Boulevard and 72nd Avenue  
Eastbound Pines Boulevard and 136th Avenue  
Northbound 136th Avenue and Pines Boulevard  
Eastbound Pines Boulevard and 129th Avenue  
Westbound Pembroke Road and 129th Avenue

Signs will be posted at all the intersections to let drivers know of the new rules. Pembroke Pines Police say a citation for running a red light will cost you \$158.

**MEDIA OUTLET:** FOX Miami (Channel 7)

**HEADLINE:** Broward County mayor holds opioid epidemic town hall meeting

**BYLINE:** Vanessa Medina

**LINK:** <http://wsvn.com/news/local/broward-county-mayor-holds-opioid-epidemic-town-hall-meeting/>

**STORY:** PEMBROKE PINES, FLA. (WSVN) - Government leaders and healthcare professionals gathered in Broward County to tackle the opioid use epidemic.

Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief held an opioid epidemic town hall meeting Thursday morning to talk about how officials can find a solution.

Police said they have seen an increase in heroin in the streets.

“When you have our coroners and medical examiners who are telling us that there are dozens each week of individuals dying from this opioid epidemic and their addiction, then you know that we have to try to do everything that we can comprehensively to stop it in its tracks,” said Florida Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz.

Heroin is one form of an opiate which is used on the streets. Medically, they’re used to treat pain, but it is highly addictive. “We are facing at the local state and national level, Broward, Florida and all across the country, an opioid addiction epidemic of epic proportions,” Wasserman-Schultz said.

In Broward County there were 582 overdoses in 2016 alone. Thus far in 2017, the overdose rate is close to 300, so the numbers are actually increasing.

“We are pooling our resources, not just on a county level, but with our 31 municipalities to combat this problem,” Sharief said.

Law enforcement, elected officials and other experts attended Thursday’s meeting to learn more about the drug, how to tell if someone is high and if they’re addicted. “This is everybody,” Sharief said. “It knows no socioeconomic boundaries and so I believe that that’s why it’s become such a national epidemic.”

And Sharief said this issue affects all tax payers. “A person is addicted and they’re having a crisis, they’re having a failure from overdose of an opioid, we pay for that in the form of healthcare, emergency services and even at times, for mortuary services,” she said.

Wasserman-Schultz told 7News that she wants to be sure there are services out there for these issues. “What I’m concerned about as a member of Congress on the Appropriations committee is that we make sure we provide the resources and the tools that recovery specialists and programs need,” she said, “to be able to help break the cycle of addiction.”

About 300 people attended the meeting, which is a positive sign for Sharief. “People are recognizing that this is a problem in our community and we’re gonna solve it together,” she said.