



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

Would-be designated driver admits he Was drunk, texting in deadly Norfolk crash

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A 21-year-old Natick man has pled guilty to being drunk and in the process of texting on his cell phone at about 2 a.m. July 20, 2013 when his SUV collided with a pole – killing his 24-year old friend in the passenger seat.

Jason Seelye was indicted by a Norfolk County Grand Jury in 2013 for felony Motor Vehicle Homicide while Operating Under the Influence and Operating Negligently, Negligent Operation Causing Injury while using a Mobile Phone, and two civil infractions: Sending or Receiving an Electronic Message While Driving and Failure to Keep Marked Lanes.

The crash occurred in the vicinity of 364 Main Street. When Norfolk officers arrived, Seelye's SUV was blocking the eastbound traffic lane. Witnesses were performing chest compressions and attempting to save the life of passenger Daniel Pinnick, who was just 24 years old and a resident of Randolph. Pinnick was transported by the Norfolk Fire Department to a waiting MedFlight medical evacuation helicopter. He later died of his injuries at the UMASS Medical Center in Worcester.

The defendant, who was 20 at the time of the crash, took a breath test at the Norfolk Police Station which registered a .11, above the legal limit. The defendant admitted to officers that he had been drinking and using marijuana earlier in the evening. Witnesses at the scene reported seeing Seelye throwing items including empty bottles from his vehicle after the crash, while bystanders worked to keep Pinnick alive.

Seelye, who was not of legal age to drink the night of the crash, stated that he was supposed to have been the designated driver that evening, but became intoxicated instead.

"Assistant District Attorney Debi Curley asked for three to five years in State Prison for this crime, followed by five years of probation with strict conditions" District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey said after the defendant admitted his guilt to Judge Kenneth Fishman at Norfolk Superior Court on April 14. The Court sentenced him to 2 ½ years in the House of Correction followed by five years probation. During that time, he cannot drive, must abstain from drugs and alcohol, have no contact with the victim's family and adhere to other restrictions on his freedom. "We thank the Norfolk Police Depart

The District Attorney extended his sympathy to the victim's surviving family. "This was an absolutely needless death," Morrissey said. "Parents, teachers, law enforcement, we all warn how dangerous it is to text and drive, how dangerous it is to drink and drive. But in the end, the individual has to heed those warnings. When they don't, too often we see preventable tragedies like this."