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ESSEX POLICE DEPARTMENT

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SEPTEMBER 19, 2022
CHARGES ISSUED IN CRASH
UPDATE TO ORIGINAL RELEASE FROM JULY 16, 2022

Narrative: On July 16, 2022, at 8:46 pm the Essex Police responded to a two-car head on motor vehicle collision with multiple injuries located on Route 289 between the Exit 7 and Exit 9 ramps in the town of Essex. The investigation of this crash revealed the following:

Operator Duga was operating his vehicle at speeds of approximately 97 miles per hour. At the time, Duga was being followed by Martin K. Patterson. Martin captured the events on a dash camera and was on the phone with emergency services at the time of the crash. Duga was unable to keep his vehicle in a single eastbound lane in the area of mile marker eight, also known as the rock cut. Duga attempted to pass another vehicle on Route 289 in an unsafe manner in an area marked with a double yellow center line without the opposing lane clear for sufficient distance.

After Duga initiated the passing maneuver and crossed the center line into oncoming traffic, he lost control of his vehicle while braking. Duga struck the Uhl/Israel family head-on in the westbound lane. All vehicle occupants of both vehicles were transported to the hospital. Three vehicle occupants were admitted with serious injuries and have since been release from the hospital and are recovering. The cause of this crash was determined to be Duga crossing the center line and passing in an unsafe manner. Contributing factors to the crash were the speed and manor of operation by Duga. Further. based on the observation made on the scene and the items recovered from Duga's vehicle, alcohol and/or drug impairment is believed to have been a contributing factor.

On September 15th, 2022, in consultation with the Chittenden County States Attorney's Office, Jean Duga was cited into court to answer for a felony charge of Gross Negligent Operations with Serious Injury Resulting and a misdemeanor charge of Excessive Speed. On September 19th, 2022 charges of Negligent Operation and Excessive Speed were also filed against Martin Patterson for events leading up to the crash. Issued by: Sgt. Chistolini
Contact: Ofc. S. Gragg

ORIGINAL RELEASE:
Date: July 16, 2022
Case Number: 22ES005192

On July 16, 2022, at 8:46 pm the Essex Police responded to a two-car head on motor vehicle collision with multiple injuries located on Route 289 between the Exit 7 and Exit 9 ramps in the town of Essex.

Initial investigation revealed a male operator, Jean Duga (34) of Underhill, Vermont was operating a white 2011 Hyundai Tucson traveling eastbound on Route 289 when he crossed into oncoming traffic and struck a green 2014 Subaru Outback traveling westbound. Duga was traveling with his two dogs. The operator of the Subaru was identified as Kevin Uhl (40) from Traverse City, Michigan who was traveling with his family which included an adult female, male juvenile, male juvenile, female juvenile. Duga was transported to UVM Medical Center Emergency Department where he is listed in critical condition. One dog was transported from the scene to Bevs Animal Hospital for injuries. The other dog was later released to a family member.

Uhl and his family were also transported to the UVM Medical Center Emergency room for injuries ranging from major to minor.

A portion of Route 289 was closed to traffic for approximately two hours while emergency crews were investigating.

Essex Police was assisted by Vermont State Police, Essex Town Fire Department, Essex Junction Fire Department, Essex Rescue, Colchester Rescue, UVM Rescue, St. Michael's Rescue, and Anytime Towing.

Essex Police would also like to thank several citizens that included a medical doctor and a registered nurse who stopped to render aid until medical personnel arrived on scene.

Speed and impairment appear to be a factor. The investigation is ongoing. Any witnesses to the collision or the events leading up to that the police have not spoken to already are encouraged to contact the Essex Police.

Issued by: Sgt. John Dunn

Contact: Officer Stephen Gragg