

# Ex-cop gets 3 to 9 years

## Admits guilt in 2016 wrong-way, fatal DWI crash

BY KESHIA CLUKEY  
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A former Suffolk police officer who admitted driving drunk in a fatal wrong-way crash in West Islip vowed at his sentencing Monday to work to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Robert Scheuerer, addressing the court in Central Islip and members of the victim's family, said he accepts full responsibility for the 2016 crash that killed Brian Fusaro, 37, of Bay Shore.

"Not a day goes by that I don't think about it," said Scheuerer, 27, of Farmingdale, adding that the leg he lost in the crash also serves as a reminder. "Nothing I can say will bring him back, but I will do everything I can to make sure it won't happen in the future."

Afterward, State Supreme Court Justice Fernando Camacho sentenced him to 3 to 9 years in prison, a reduction in return for his guilty plea to aggravated vehicular homicide.

Scheuerer admitted he was drunk when he crashed head-on into a van driven by Fusaro. The van exploded and Fusaro burned to death.

Although his sentence had not yet been imposed, Scheuerer began serving his term in January 2018.



Robert Scheuerer, 27, appearing contrite at his sentencing Monday in Central Islip, said, "Not a day goes by that I don't think about it."

Camacho became visually emotional as he sentenced the former cop.

"Every day, for the rest of your life, every waking moment, in honor of Brian Fusaro, share your story," he said. "If you share your story, it will save lives."

The crash came after Scheuerer drank 10 pints of beer and a mixed drink on Sept. 27, 2016, then drove west in the east-bound lanes of Sunrise Highway, Assistant District Attorney Marc Lindemann said previously. Fusaro's family and Lindemann declined to comment

following the sentencing.

Scheuerer pleaded guilty in December 2017 and faced a maximum sentence of 8 to 25 years. Lindemann had recommended 4 to 12 years because of the plea.

Scheuerer, who had been on the force for about a year at the time of the crash, was fired after he was indicted. He surrendered in a Central Islip courtroom on Jan. 18, 2018.

Camacho told of receiving numerous letters from Scheuerer's family and friends, vouching for his character, as well as many statements from those impacted

by Fusaro's death, making for a difficult decision. Before the crash, Scheuerer did "everything right," Camacho said.

He was a "star athlete, model student, hero cop, loyal friend... the best of the best," Camacho said. "How do you reconcile that picture with the man who got behind the wheel of the car and took the life of Brian Fusaro?"

Lindemann urged the court not to give Scheuerer special treatment.

"Yes, he did lead a blameless life prior to the crash," Lindemann told Camacho during the hearing. "However, the mission of the Suffolk County Police Department is to serve and protect the community."

Scheuerer's attorney, Edward Sapone, argued that his client should be given a second chance and the opportunity to educate others about the consequences of drinking and driving.

Scheuerer also was sentenced to one to three years on the charge of second-degree manslaughter, one year on the second-degree reckless endangerment charge, one year on the aggravated driving while intoxicated charge, and six months on the reckless driving charge. All will be served concurrently.

"I think Robert Scheuerer deserves much credit for accepting full responsibility," Sapone told members of the news media after the sentencing. "I think the sentence imposed will give him the opportunity to continue to help people."

## 3 picks for Suffolk commissioners

BY RICK BRAND  
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Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone has nominated Frances Pierre to head the county's \$301 million Department of Social Services, which would make her the first African-American woman in the post.

Pierre's name was put forward Monday for the \$171,007-a-year job, along with those of Andrea Neubauer, to become commissioner of the Probation Department, and John Jordan as commissioner of the Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services. Jordan and Neubauer already have been serving as act-

ing commissioners.

The Social Services commissioner oversees a department with more than 1,000 county employees and is in charge of welfare, homeless housing, child and adult protective services, foster care, Medicaid and SNAP, previously known as food stamps. Pierre's job has a five-year term. She, Jordan and Neubauer will need confirmation by the county legislature.

While Bellone has named JoAnne Taormina as his new personnel officer to head county Civil Service, the county executive has yet to put in a resolution for her legislative confirmation.

Pierre, 55, of Deer Park, has

served as chief operating officer of HELP USA, a national organization founded by now-Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo 30 years ago that develops and manages transitional housing, operates shelters, and runs prevention programs, according to Bellone aides.

In that job, she has managed a \$110 million portfolio and a staff of 1,200. Earlier, she was HELP's senior vice president for family and day care services, overseeing 1,000 units of transitional housing at 10 shelters throughout the metropolitan area.

Before joining HELP, Pierre was associate commissioner of shelter operations for the New York City Department of Home-

less Services under Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Neubauer, who has served as acting commissioner since 2017, will make \$144,620 a year if approved by lawmakers. Jordan, who served as deputy commissioner under Joseph William, who retired last year, will make \$128,332 a year if confirmed.

Bellone also announced the hiring of Natalie Wright as chief deputy commissioner of the Department of Economic Development and Planning. Since 2015, she has worked in the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery as executive director of community reconstruction, infrastructure and small business programs.

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#### THIS DATE IN HISTORY

**1868** The impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, accused of "high crimes and misdemeanors" for trying to fire the secretary of war, began in the Senate. He was acquitted on May 26.

**1933** In German elections, the Nazi Party won 44 percent of the vote and joined with a conservative nationalist party to gain a slim majority in the Reichstag.

**1946** Winston Churchill delivered his "Iron Curtain" speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

**1955** Elvis Presley made his television debut on "Louisiana Hayride" in Shreveport.

**1970** The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons went into effect after 43 nations ratified it.

**2002** President George W. Bush slapped punishing tariffs of 8 percent to 30 percent on several types of imported steel in an effort to aid the ailing U.S. industry.

**2018** House Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republican allies of President Donald Trump pleaded with him to back away from his threatened tariffs, but the president responded, "We're not backing down."