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September 8, 2021

In Re: Troopers Pfindel, Witkowski and Summers

Dear Colleagues:

Pursuant to Brady v. Maryland 83 S.Ct 119 (1983) the State makes the following disclosure as to the above-captioned troopers.

It has come to the attention of this office that these troopers resigned from their position within the VSP. They are under investigation by the FBI. *See attached Press Release.* This is the extent of knowledge the State has on this issue.

Sincerely,

Erica A Marthage

State's Attorney

STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
VERMONT STATE POLICE

Vermont State Police issues statement on resignation of three troopers

WATERBURY, Vt. (Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021) — Three state troopers have resigned following allegations related to fraudulent COVID-19 vaccination cards.

Shawn Sommers and Raymond Witkowski submitted their resignations on Aug. 10, 2021, one day after another Vermont State Police trooper raised concerns with supervisors about their conduct. David Pfindel resigned effective Sept. 3 following additional investigation by the Department of Public Safety.

The three former troopers are suspected of having varying roles in the creation of fraudulent COVID-19 vaccination cards, which may be a violation of federal law. The details surrounding this incident, reported to supervisors by other troopers, were immediately reported to federal law enforcement authorities.

“The accusations in this case involve an extraordinary level of misconduct — a criminal violation of the law — and I could not be more upset and disappointed,” said Col. Matthew T. Birmingham, director of the Vermont State Police. “If these allegations are proved to be true, it is reprehensible that state troopers would manipulate vaccination cards in the midst of a pandemic, when being vaccinated is one of the most important steps anyone can take to keep their community safe from COVID-19.”

“I’m embarrassed that this situation has occurred and know that it has tarnished the reputation of the Vermont State Police,” Col. Birmingham continued. “That said, the alleged criminal conduct from these troopers does not represent the values and actions of the dedicated men and women of the Vermont State Police.”

Added Vermont Public Safety Commissioner Michael Schirling: “Based on an initial internal review, we do not believe there is anything more the state police could have done to prevent this from occurring. As soon as other troopers became aware of this situation, they raised the allegations internally, and commanders took swift and decisive action to hold these individuals accountable and report this matter to federal authorities.”

The state police referred the matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Burlington. An investigation by the FBI is underway, and as a result the state police was unable to release information about the incident prior to today’s statement.

Sommers and Witkowski both joined the Vermont State Police in July 2016 and were assigned to field stations following their graduation from the Vermont Police Academy in January 2017. Sommers worked at the Rutland Barracks until October 2017, when he transferred to Shaftsbury; he transferred back to Rutland in December 2020. Witkowski spent his state police career at the Shaftsbury Barracks. Pfindel was hired in January 2014 and assigned to the St. Albans Barracks. He transferred to Shaftsbury in February 2016, became a detective trooper with the Bureau of Criminal Investigations in July 2016, and returned to work as a road trooper in April 2020.

Due to the ongoing FBI investigation, the Vermont State Police is unable to comment further at this time.