



BCPO News

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Man Sentenced for Causing Friend's Death While Driving Impaired

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a 22-year-old Pemberton Township man was sentenced today to four years in New Jersey state prison for driving impaired and causing a 2018 crash in Woodland Township that killed a friend who was traveling in his vehicle.

Donald Shinn, who pled guilty in December 2019 to Vehicular Homicide (Second Degree), must serve 85 percent of the sentence before becoming eligible for parole. His driver's license will be suspended for five years following his release from prison.

The investigation began on December 22, 2018 just after 3 a.m., when New Jersey State Police Troopers responded to a motor vehicle crash on County Road 563.

The investigation revealed that Shinn's Toyota Tundra left the roadway and struck several trees after attempting to illegally pass another vehicle. Cody Watson, 20, of Pemberton Township, was seated in the front passenger's seat and was pronounced dead at the scene. Shinn was treated for moderate injuries at a local hospital. A third passenger seated in the rear of the vehicle declined to accept medical treatment.

Toxicology tests performed on blood drawn from Shinn following the crash indicated his blood alcohol concentration at the time was .12%.

Assistant Prosecutor Josh Dennis, supervisor of the BCPO Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Unit, said the fatal accident had a devastating effect on multiple people.

"The loss to the Watson family is unimaginable," AP Dennis told the court before sentencing. "So very tragic, and permanent. One simple decision was made by the defendant, and that changed everything for the Watson family, and for everyone who knew and loved Cody, including the defendant himself, who was his very close friend."

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