

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS – PLYMOUTH DISTRICT
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NEWS RELEASE
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**INVESTIGATION CLOSED IN MIDDLEBORO MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISION
THAT KILLED FIVE PEOPLE**

BROCKTON – Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced that the Massachusetts State Police assigned to Troop D in Middleboro, in conjunction with State Police Detectives assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office have concluded their investigation into a two-car collision in Middleboro that left five people dead.

On Monday, October 24, 2016, at approximately 12:11 A.M., State Police received a 911 call reporting a wrong-way operator heading south on the northbound side of Route 495 in Middleboro. Approximately one minute later, State Police received additional 911 calls reporting a head-on collision with one vehicle fully engulfed in flames.

When State Police arrived at the scene in the area of Exit 3 of Route 495 North, they observed a white 2011 Infiniti G37 sedan with extensive front end damage and driver Valantein V. Burson (DOB: 02/18/85) of Fall River. Burson was the sole occupant in the vehicle. Police observed a second vehicle at the scene, a 2003 Mercury Sable, fully engulfed in flames. There were four occupants in the Mercury Sable. They were identified as two Anna Maria College students, Kraig A. Diggs (DOB: 09/29/96) of Osterville and Jordan Galvin-Jutras (DOB: 05/01/97) of Hyannis, and two Becker College students, Jordan J. Fisher (DOB: 02/09/97) of Harwich and Cory P. Licata (DOB: 07/07/98) of West Babylon, New York. The occupants of both vehicles were fatally injured in the crash.

The investigation revealed that for several hours before the crash, Burson attended a house party in New Bedford, where she reportedly smoked marijuana and consumed alcohol. Burson left the party at approximately 11:00 pm. According to witnesses at the party, Burson left from the party alone and had made plans to meet an acquaintance at her Fall River apartment, but Burson never arrived home. Burson's postmortem toxicology report revealed that she had a blood alcohol content of .16 and marijuana in her system.

Witnesses traveling south on Route 495 observed Burson's Infiniti make a 3-point turn on the northbound side and travel at a high rate of speed in the wrong direction for approximately two to three minutes. The investigation found that the Infiniti nearly struck three or four cars with the vehicles traveling northbound prior to crashing head-on into the Mercury. Witnesses

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reported that the Infiniti's headlights and a directional signal appeared to be activated as the car traveled in the opposite travel lane.

One witness who was a passenger travelling on Route 495 North at Exit 3 called 911 to report seeing a motor vehicle traveling on Route 495 South that was flashing its high beam headlights at northbound traffic. The driver of that vehicle told police that the Infiniti then passed them. This witness said the Infiniti's headlights were active.

Troopers from the Massachusetts State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section (C.A.R.S.) conducted a crash reconstruction as part of this investigation. The C.A.R.S. investigation revealed that the Infiniti's headlight control switch was in the off position. There were no tire marks or roadway evidence of braking left by either vehicle prior to impact. The speedometer of the Infiniti was stuck at approximately 90 MPH. A preliminary speed range calculation revealed that if the Mercury was driving at a speed range of 65-75 MPH, the Infiniti was driving at a speed range of 83-93 MPH.

The crash was investigated by Massachusetts State Police assigned to Troop D in Middleboro, in conjunction with State Police Detectives assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, the State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section and State Police Crime Scene Services.

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