



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

Date: Monday, July 9, 2018

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FCSO Deputy Terminated After Failure to Take Action to Prevent Fatal Crash

Flagler County Sheriff's Deputy Robert Finn was served his notice of intent to discipline with termination on Monday afternoon following an Internal Affairs investigation into his actions on April 16, 2018 involving a traffic crash on I-95.

At 2:04 a.m., FCSO Communications Center dispatched a deputy to a medical call on Carlson Lane in Palm Coast. Deputy Robert Finn also acknowledged the call as a back-up unit but failed to immediately respond. According to GPS records, Deputy R. Finn's response was delayed 4 minutes after he acknowledged the call. While responding to the medical call and exiting I-95 at Palm Coast Parkway Deputy R. Finn encountered a wrong-way driver traveling north on the southbound exit ramp and had to take evasive action to avoid a collision. Deputy R. Finn failed to take any action to stop the errant driver and continued to the medical call despite the fact that another deputy and medical units had already arrived to the medical call. At 2:13 a.m., FCSO Communications received a call of a head-on collision on I-95. Deputy R. Finn continued to respond to the medical call and arrived at 2:14 a.m. At 2:17 a.m., Deputy R. Finn leaves the medical call to respond to the traffic crash on I-95.

Deputy R. Finn was on scene at the crash for approximately 15 minutes when a witness advised him that he saw a vehicle traveling the wrong way (north) on the southbound exit ramp to Palm Coast Pkwy and pass "a cop" who was traveling with his lights and sirens activated on the off ramp. During the Internal Investigation, Deputy R. Finn stated that he had to swerve to avoid the vehicle but he thought he saw the vehicle turn at the end of the ramp and correct its course of travel so he did not initiate a traffic stop.

During the crash investigation it was determined the vehicle driving the wrong-way on I-95 was the same vehicle that had passed Deputy R. Finn on the exit ramp just minutes before. The crash on I-95 resulted in the death of Wendell Parker, the driver of the vehicle traveling in the wrong direction, and serious injuries to the driver of the vehicle that was struck head-on.

"This is a tragic case where Deputy R. Finn witnessed a vehicle traveling in the wrong direction and failed to take immediate action," Undersheriff Jack Bisland said. "While we will never know with certainty if Deputy R. Finn could have changed the sequence of events and prevented this crash by

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attempting to stop the vehicle, we do know that as a law enforcement officer it was his duty to take immediate action and he failed to do so.”

Deputy R. Finn had been reassigned to the Communications Center handling calls on the phone during the internal investigation. He has ten days to appeal his disciplinary termination. He has been employed with the FCSO since June 15, 2011.

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