

# ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE



Essex County Prosecutors Office  
Essex County Veterans Courthouse  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
973-621-4700

THEODORE N. STEPHENS II  
ACTING ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTOR  
Contact: Katherine Carter  
973-621-4021 (Office) 973-289-9704 (Cell)

**Subject: Essex County Jury Convicts Two Bloomfield Police Officers of Official Misconduct**  
**Date: November 05, 2015**  
**Category: Official Misconduct**  
**Defendant(s): Sean Courter; Orlando Trinidad**

**Nov. 5, 2015**

## **Essex County Jury Convicts Two Bloomfield Police Officers on All Counts**

**Newark** – Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray announced today that an Essex County jury has convicted two Bloomfield police officers of official misconduct and related charges in connection with a June 7, 2012 motor vehicle stop on the Garden State Parkway in which the officers falsely accused a motorist of resisting arrest and going for an officer's weapon.

Following a five week trial before the Honorable Michael L. Ravin, Judge of the Superior Court, the jury found Sean Courter, 35, of Englishtown and Orlando Trinidad, 34, of Bloomfield guilty of conspiracy to commit official misconduct, official misconduct, tampering with public records, falsifying public records and false swearing. In addition Trinidad was also found guilty of simple assault.

A third police officer, Albert Sutterlin, pled guilty on Oct. 17, 2013 to falsifying and tampering with records – 4th degree offenses. He resigned from the police department.

Assistant Prosecutor Berta Rodriguez, who tried the case with Assistant Prosecutor Frantzou Simon, said, "Justice was finally served for Marcus Jeter. These officers give a bad name to all the good, honest, decent police officers. Courter and Trinidad took an oath to uphold the law. On that day in June of 2012 they violated that oath. They accused Mr. Jeter of criminal acts that led to him being charged and indicted. He was facing five years in prison. But for the dash camera in the second police vehicle, he might be in prison today."

The events that resulted in the charges against the officers began with the arrest of Jeter. Bloomfield police officers were called to Jeter's home when he and his girlfriend got into a verbal dispute. Jeter voluntarily left the home and the premises. Officer Courter followed Jeter onto the Garden State Parkway and stopped him. Courter tried to get Jeter to leave his vehicle but he refused saying he feared for his life. Courter called for back up.

When Trinidad arrived on the scene he struck the front of Jeter's car. Courter then broke the window and with help from Trinidad pulled Jeter from the car.

Following the incident the officers wrote police reports stating that Jeter attempted to grab

Courter's gun and stating that he struck Trinidad. Based on those reports Jeter was charged with eluding, resisting arrest, aggravated assault and attempting to disarm a police officer. For nearly a year, prosecutors only had the dashboard video from Courter's patrol vehicle. Jeter's lawyer sought the second dash camera video through an Open Public Records Act request. That video clearly showed Jeter's hands up in a surrender position throughout the encounter.

Based on the newly discovered video, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office dismissed the charges against Jeter and opened an investigation into the officers that resulted in an Essex County grand jury returning an indictment against the officers in January of 2014.

After the verdict was announced bail was immediately revoked by Judge Ravin and both officers were remanded to county jail to await sentencing. Sentencing is scheduled for January 11.

Both officers face a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in New Jersey State Prison.

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*Essex County Prosecutor's Office Newark, NJ*