

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



THOMAS J. SPOTA
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Heart doctor in fatal DWI crash charged with manslaughter, other crimes

Bond was continued today at \$250,000 for a Setauket cardiologist indicted for manslaughter, leaving the scene of a crash, and other crimes in the death of a mother of three as she drove to her job as an X-Ray technician.

Monica Peterman, 45, of Middle Island, died when her car was broadsided at the intersection of Route 111 and Route 25 by Dr. Thomas Stavola on June 14. Ms. Peterman died at the hospital that employed her; Saint Catherine's Hospital in Smithtown.

Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota said the impact of the collision embedded the front license plate of the physician's car in the driver's side door of the victim's vehicle.

Before State Supreme Court Justice Fernando Camacho this morning, Stavola pleaded not guilty to leaving the scene of an accident, manslaughter in the second degree, vehicular manslaughter in the second degree, driving while intoxicated as a misdemeanor, and reckless driving.

District Attorney Spota said Stavola's blood, drawn ninety minutes after the crash, had a blood alcohol level of .10.

“Witnesses who came upon the crash scene said the defendant suddenly left and began walking west on Route 25,” District Attorney Spota explained.

“What I found most troubling is the fact that a physician chose not to render any kind of aid or use his cellphone to call 911 to get some assistance for a seriously injured motorist,” DA Spota said.

Witnesses provided a description of Stavola to police officers who put a description over the air to patrols. A police Sargent on his way to the crash scene spotted Stavola walking briskly, with his head down, away from the crash. He made no attempts to signal the Sargent. The defendant was approximately 500 feet down the road when he was stopped.

Justice Camacho directed the physician to return to court on February 4.

Robert.Clifford@suffolkcountyny.gov

A criminal charge is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.