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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025 | TIMESTELEGRAM.COM

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David Ferrone stands before Judge Michael Nolan on June 12. CASEY PRITCHARD/UTICA OBSERVER DISPATCH

Corrections officer in Messiah Nantwi case pleads guilty

Casey Pritchard
Utica Observer Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Another corrections officer has pleaded guilty in the Messiah Nantwi case and another is in talks with the special prosecutor's office.

Nantwi, an inmate at Mid-State Correctional Facility, was brutally beaten to death on March 1 by a Correction Emergency Response Team to the point of unresponsiveness and beaten twice more, with his hands cuffed behind his back. After the fact, the grand jury alleges corrections officers met together to plant evidence and submit false testimony.

David Ferrone was before Judge Michael Nolan on Oct. 1 and had been charged with second-degree man-

slaughter, two counts of fifth-degree conspiracy, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing, and tampering with physical evidence.

He pleaded guilty to tampering with physical evidence and will serve a three-year conditional discharge, provided he cooperates with the prosecution in the upcoming trial.

Standing before Judge Michael Nolan, Ferrone admitted that on March 1, Ferrone had planted a weapon in Messiah Nantwi's room that had not been there with the intent to sway official findings from the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision or a law enforcement agency that the use of force was justified.

Ferrone is the fifth corrections officer to plead guilty in the Nantwi case. The four others are Nicholas Vitale, Joshua Bartlett, Nathan Palmer, and Daniel Burger.

Francis Chandler had been charged with second-degree murder, first-degree manslaughter, first-degree gang assault, second-degree gang assault, fifth-degree conspiracy, and first-degree offering a false instrument for file.

Nolan said he was aware that Chandler and his attorney had been in communication with Special Prosecutor William Fitzpatrick about a "...possible resolution."

A meeting with Fitzpatrick's office is scheduled sometime between Oct. 1 and Oct. 3, prompting Nolan to adjourn the case until Oct. 16, where either oral arguments or an acceptance of a plea deal will be presented before the court.

Utica man killed, 2 others injured in car crash

Cara Dolan Berry
Utica Observer Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

A 59-year-old Utica man was killed Sept. 30 in an automobile crash in Newport, according to New York State Police.

New York State Police responded just after 9:15 p.m. to a 2-car crash with injuries involved on Butler Road in Newport, Herkimer County.

A preliminary investigation determined that Jordan F. Doxtader, 32, from Newport, was driving a 2011 Chevrolet Silverado eastbound on Butler Road when he lost control of his vehicle around a sharp curve. Doxtader's vehicle crossed into the westbound land and collided head-on with a 2024 Ford Transit Connect being driven by Rodney K. Dodge.

Dodge was pronounced dead at the scene, troopers said.

One passenger in the Ford, Dale R. Dodge, 27, also of Utica, was transported to Wynn Hospital in downtown Utica for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries.

Doxtader, who was alone in his vehicle, was airlifted by Mercy Flight Helicopter to Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, but his injuries were determined not to be life-threatening, troopers said.

New York State Police were assisted at the scene of the accident by the Newport Fire Department, Mercy Flight, and Kuyahoor Valley Ambulance.

The investigation into the crash remains ongoing.

Lawsuit filed after deadly NY tour bus crash

Emily Barnes
New York Connect Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two passengers aboard the bus that crashed in Pembroke last month, killing five people, filed a lawsuit against both the driver and the tour bus company.

In a lawsuit filed in Queens County on Sept. 12, Mohammed Rahman and Zakir Hossain are claiming M&Y Tour, Inc. was negligent in the hiring, training, supervision and retention of driver Bin Shao and that they sustained "severe and permanent injuries" as a result of the incident.

Here's what to know.

Just after 12:20 p.m. on Interstate 90 in Pembroke, Genesee County, an eastbound 61-passenger 2005 Van Hool motorcoach traveled onto the right shoulder, then across both eastbound lanes and into the grassy median before reentering the eastbound travel lanes,



Five people were killed and 48 passengers and the driver were injured after a tour bus rolled over while heading east on the New York Thruway in Pembroke, Genesee County, on Aug. 22. TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

COVID-19 levels in NY wastewater among highest in U.S.

Emily Barnes
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USA TODAY NETWORK

Wastewater COVID-19 levels are currently highest across the Northeast, including in New York, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest data.

The CDC's most recent wastewater data, for the week ending Sept. 25, shows the Empire State had "high" levels of COVID-19 viral activity, which may indicate a rise of infection in an area, the agency says.

Of the 61 sites throughout the state reporting their wastewater COVID-19 levels for the week ending Sept. 25, "very high" levels were found at sites in the following 14 counties: Bronx,

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