



Office of the New York State Attorney General Letitia James

Office of Special Investigation

September 28, 2026

Report on the Investigation of the Death of Steven Christy

OVERVIEW

New York Executive Law Section 70-b (Section 70-b) authorizes the Attorney General's Office of Special Investigation (OSI) to investigate and, if warranted, to prosecute offenses arising from any incident in which the death of a person is caused by a police officer or a peace officer. When, as in this case, OSI does not seek charges against the officer, Section 70-b requires OSI to issue a public report describing its investigation. This is the public report of OSI's investigation of the death of Steven Christy, who died on November 30, 2025, after he was struck by a car driven by off-duty Village of Monticello Police Department (MPD) Sergeant George Mendez on November 25, 2025.

On November 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., in Sullivan County, off-duty MPD Sergeant George Mendez was driving a personal car when he struck Mr. Christy as he was crossing Pleasant Street on foot, near the intersection with High Street, in the Village of Monticello. Mr. Christy was transported to Garnet Health Medical Center, and then to Westchester Medical Center, where he died of his injuries on November 30, 2025. OSI was notified of the incident and began investigating the afternoon of Mr. Christy's death.

Mr. Christy was 72 years old when he died.

Having thoroughly investigated the matter and analyzed the law, OSI concludes that a prosecutor would not be able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt at trial that Sgt. Mendez committed a crime when he caused Mr. Christy's death. OSI will therefore not seek charges and closes the matter with this report.

FACTS

The Scene

Pleasant Street/New York State Route 42 runs in a north/south direction and intersects with High Street in the Village of Monticello, as shown in the aerial image below.



At that intersection, Pleasant Street contains one southbound lane, one northbound lane, and one middle turning lane. The lanes are not physically divided. The posted speed limit is 30 miles per hour (mph). There is a pedestrian sidewalk along the southbound side of Pleasant Street. The intersection of Pleasant Street and High Street is controlled by traffic lights suspended over the roadway. On the south side of the intersection, there is a marked pedestrian crosswalk across all lanes of Pleasant Street and a crosswalk signal light. Pleasant Street slopes downhill as the road moves south away from the intersection with High Street.



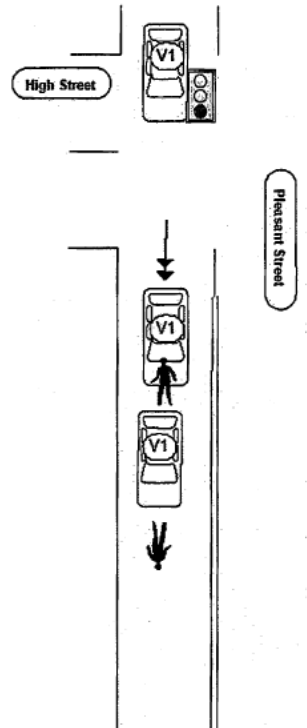
Google Earth image of the intersection at Pleasant Street and High Street, looking south on Pleasant Street

On the evening of November 25, 2025, it was dark and raining; the roadway was wet and visibility was poor.

Incident

Based on the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Police Accident Report (MV-104A Report) and Police Report for Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents (MV-104D Report), police incident reports, and OSI's interviews with responding MPD officers and Sullivan County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) deputies, on November 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., Sgt. Mendez was driving a 2016 Acura RDX SUV, which had been previously registered to his wife. The Acura had a New York registration that expired February 2, 2024, and had not been renewed. The Acura had not undergone an annual inspection and did not have a front license plate as required under New York law. As detailed in the diagram below taken from the Police Accident Report, the collision occurred when Sgt. Mendez was traveling southbound on Pleasant Street, after he passed through the intersection with High Street. Mr. Christy was crossing Pleasant Street on foot

while pushing a shopping cart in an area where there was not a crosswalk, south of the pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Pleasant Street and High Street.



Notification to Monticello Police Department

Sgt. Mendez used his personal cell phone to call MPD at 6:00 p.m. There is no recording of Sgt. Mendez's phone call.

OSI interviewed MPD Officer Gary Mota, who was working as the MPD dispatcher the evening of November 25, 2025. Officer Mota told OSI that, at 6:00 p.m., he answered a phone call to the police department in which a male said a pedestrian "jumped" in front of his vehicle and the pedestrian was struck on Pleasant Street. Officer Mota said he did not recognize the caller's voice; he asked for the caller's name and the caller replied, "George." Officer Mota asked the caller's last name and the caller replied, "Mendez." Officer Mota said it was at that point he realized the caller was Sgt. Mendez, whom he worked with at MPD. Officer Mota notified Sullivan County 911 to dispatch EMS and the fire department to the scene. He relayed the information he received from the call to Lieutenant Gary Johnstone, who was in his office in the police department, and Officers Darius Buckner and Derek Timinski, who were in the MPD squad room. According to the Sullivan County 911 records, Officer Mota notified 911 at 6:01 p.m.

Monticello Police Department Response

According to the MPD case report and OSI's interviews, MPD Officers Buckner and Timinski arrived at the scene of the collision within minutes of Sgt. Mendez's call. Members of the MPD are not equipped with body-worn cameras (BWCs). The headquarters of MPD is on Pleasant Street, less than a quarter of a mile from the intersection with High Street; Officers Buckner and Timinski told OSI they immediately left MPD after Officer Mota notified them of the accident, and they drove north on Pleasant Street. According to Officers Buckner and Timinski, when they arrived, they saw Sgt. Mendez in the middle of the southbound lane of Pleasant Street performing a sternal rub on Mr. Christy; Mr. Christy was lying in the roadway, breathing but unresponsive and bleeding from his head. Sgt. Mendez was in front of the Acura, which was parked in the southbound lane and had visible front-end damage. Officer Timinski told OSI he saw an overturned shopping cart containing several items in the middle of Pleasant Street when he first arrived. Officers Buckner and Timinski said they directed traffic and shut down Pleasant Street around the collision; shortly thereafter, MPD Lt. Johnstone and MPD Chief David Lindsay arrived at the scene. According to the Sullivan County 911 records, members of the Monticello Fire Department and Empress Ambulance arrived on scene within eight minutes of Sgt. Mendez's call to MPD.

OSI interviewed MPD Chief Lindsay, who said he learned of Sgt. Mendez's involvement in the incident upon his arrival at the scene. He said he discussed with Lt. Johnstone turning over the investigation of the incident to the Sullivan County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) to avoid any appearance of bias. Chief Lindsay told OSI he called the Sullivan County Sheriff and asked that SCSO respond to the scene and take over the investigation.

Sullivan County Sheriff's Office Response

According to the SCSO Incident Report and OSI's interviews, SCSO Deputy Bailey Mitchell responded to the scene. Members of the SCSO are not equipped with BWCs. OSI interviewed Deputy Mitchell, who said that when he arrived, Mr. Christy was being loaded into the ambulance. According to the Empress Ambulance medical records, EMS left the scene with Mr. Christy on the way to the hospital at 6:15 p.m. Deputy Mitchell learned when he arrived that the operator of the vehicle that had struck Mr. Christy was a member of the MPD. He told OSI he spoke with Sgt. Mendez, who said that he was stopped at the red light at the intersection of Pleasant Street and High Street; the light turned green and he accelerated to about 20 miles per hour and proceeded approximately 50 feet down the road when he struck the male pedestrian. Sgt. Mendez told Deputy Mitchell he didn't see the pedestrian until he struck him; Sgt. Mendez said he got out of the car and began to render aid to the man, who was unconscious and bleeding from his head.

According to the SCSO Incident Report and OSI's interviews, SCSO Corporal Charles Stackhouse responded to the scene after Deputy Mitchell. Cpl. Stackhouse told OSI that he knew prior to arriving at the scene that MPD Sgt. Mendez was involved in the motor vehicle collision, and that SCSO had been asked to take over the investigation. Cpl. Stackhouse said when he arrived Mr. Christy had already left in the ambulance, and EMS and the Fire Department had also left the scene. Cpl. Stackhouse told OSI he spoke with Sgt. Mendez, who said he was out running errands when he drove south on Pleasant Street and stopped at the light at the intersection with High Street. Sgt. Mendez said the light turned green, he accelerated to approximately 20 or 25 miles per hour, and he drove "a little ways" and then struck Mr. Christy.

Condition of Sgt. Mendez

MPD Chief Lindsay, Lt. Johnstone, and Officers Buckner and Timinski told OSI they did not observe Sgt. Mendez to have any signs of impairment by alcohol or drugs. SCSO Deputy Mitchell and Cpl. Stackhouse both said that when they spoke with Sgt. Mendez upon their arrival, Sgt. Mendez did not show any signs of impairment by alcohol or drugs. Deputy Mitchell told OSI that Sgt. Mendez submitted to a portable breathalyzer, which Deputy Mitchell administered. Members of SCSO are not equipped with BWCs and so the PBT test was not recorded. Further, the PBT used by SCSO does not generate a printout or preserve the reading in any way. Deputy Mitchell wrote in his report that the PBT "clarified Mendez was not impaired;" he told OSI that the PBT result registered a .00 blood alcohol content (BAC).

Sgt. Mendez was not issued any tickets that evening. SCSO Deputy Mitchell ticketed Sgt. Mendez on November 28, 2025, for violations of VTL 401(1)(a), Unregistered Motor Vehicle, and VTL 306(b), Uninspected Motor Vehicle, after members of SCSO learned that Mr. Christy was not likely to survive.

Damage to the Vehicle

Photographs of the Acura taken by Cpl. Stackhouse showed damage to the front bumper, grill, and hood. The below photographs show the Acura did not have a registration sticker or inspection sticker displayed in the windshield, or a front license plate, as required by New York law.





Collision Reconstruction

SCSO does not have officers trained in collision reconstruction; Cpl. Stackhouse told OSI that SCSO relies on the New York State Police Collision Reconstruction Unit (NYSP CRU) for assistance when needed. Cpl. Stackhouse did not call the NYSP CRU to ask for their assistance, and a collision reconstruction was not done. Cpl. Stackhouse said SCSO does not have a policy regarding when a call for assistance should be made to NYSP CRU, and as the supervisor on scene it was his judgement call whether to ask for outside assistance.

Cpl. Stackhouse told OSI that he did not reach out to NYSP CRU to ask them to conduct a collision reconstruction because there were no roadway markings or other physical evidence necessary to conduct a reconstruction, and because he believed Mr. Christy was going to survive. Cpl. Stackhouse said that when he arrived on scene, someone there (he did not recall who) told him that Mr. Christy appeared to be regaining consciousness as he was placed in the ambulance, the medical helicopter had been cancelled, and Mr. Christy was being transported to Garnet Hospital, a small, local facility. Cpl. Stackhouse told OSI that that he had been a volunteer EMT and firefighter for more than 20 years, and the combination of these factors indicated to him that Mr. Christy was not in critical condition; based on his

training and experience, a patient in critical condition would be transported to a larger hospital with a trauma center, and helicopter transport would not be cancelled.

Cpl. Stackhouse told OSI there were no skid marks or other road markings in the area where Sgt. Mendez struck Mr. Christy, and there was no debris from the Acura on the roadway.



Photographs taken by Cpl. Stackhouse of the roadway



The Acura was not seized by MPD or SCSO, the vehicle was not examined, and Sgt. Mendez retained possession of it. According to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Police Report for Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents (MV-104D Report) prepared by Deputy Mitchell, the Acura's airbags were not deployed. The Acura's event data recorder was not seized and imaged. In the weeks following the collision, SCSO asked Sgt. Mendez to give consent for the NYSP CRU to inspect the damage to the Acura and examine any information on the Acura's event data recorder, but, through his attorney, he refused.

Phone Records

OSI obtained Sgt. Mendez's cell phone records. The phone records showed that Sgt. Mendez did not place or receive any calls prior to the collision. The records showed Sgt. Mendez called the MPD at 6:00 p.m. to report the collision.

Evidence Collection

OSI and responding law enforcement did not identify or locate eyewitnesses to the collision. MPD Officer Timinski photographed the shopping cart and its contents, which were taken as evidence. Members of the MPD, SCSO, and OSI visited businesses in the vicinity of the

collision to look for video evidence. There was no video of the collision that was captured by the businesses on Pleasant Street.

Medical Attention and Cause of Death

According to the medical records, EMTs from Empress Ambulance arrived at 6:09 p.m. and Mr. Christy was breathing but unresponsive, and his pupils were non-reactive. The records stated that no air transport was available; the SCSO Incident Report narrative prepared by the assigned Detective stated Mr. Christy could not be airlifted because of the weather conditions. The EMTs transported Mr. Christy to Garnet Health Medical Center, Catskill. EMTs from Empress moved Mr. Christy by ambulance later that evening to Westchester Medical Center. Mr. Christy was pronounced dead on November 30, 2025, at 8:55 a.m.

No autopsy of Mr. Christy was conducted. Dr. Lauren Mecca, Pathologist and Medical Examiner at the Westchester County Office of the Medical Examiner, conducted a postmortem examination of Mr. Christy and prepared the death certificate. The death certificate stated the cause of Mr. Christy's death as "Complications of blunt force trauma of head" and the manner of death as "Accident (struck by motor vehicle, Pleasant Street and High Street, Monticello, Sullivan County on 11/25/25 at unknown hour)."

Officer Statement

OSI asked Sgt. Mendez for an interview, but, through his attorney, he refused. OSI asked Sgt. Mendez to consent to OSI inspecting the damage to the Acura and examining any information on the Acura's event data recorder, but, through his attorney, he refused.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Under Penal Law Section (PL) 125.10, "A person is guilty of criminally negligent homicide when, with criminal negligence, he causes the death of another person." Criminal negligence is defined in PL 15.05(4): "A person acts with criminal negligence with respect to a result [e.g., death] ... when he fails to perceive a substantial and unjustifiable risk that such result will occur The risk must be of such nature and degree that the failure to perceive it constitutes a gross deviation from the standard of care that a reasonable person would observe in the situation."

In a series of decisions, the New York Court of Appeals has required prosecutors to establish criminal negligence in fatal vehicular cases with evidence not clearly implied in the statutory definition. Under these decisions, proof of the defendant's failure to perceive the risk of death is not sufficient to convict him or her of criminally negligent homicide, even if the failure is a

“gross deviation” from a reasonable standard of care. Rather, the prosecutor must also prove that the defendant committed an “additional affirmative act” or engaged in “risk-creating behavior” amounting to “seriously blameworthy carelessness.” *People v Cabrera*, 10 NY3d 370 (2008); *People v Boutin*, 75 NY2d 692 (1990).

In *Cabrera*, the Court reversed a conviction of criminally negligent homicide based on the defendant driver’s excessive speed, saying “it takes some additional affirmative act by the defendant to transform speeding into dangerous speeding; conduct by which the defendant exhibits the kind of seriously blameworthy carelessness whose seriousness would be apparent to anyone who shares the community’s general sense of right and wrong.” *Cabrera*, 10 NY3d at 377, citing *Boutin*, 75 NY2d at 696 (internal quotation marks omitted; emphasis added). The Court continued:

Thus, in the cases where we have considered the evidence sufficient to establish criminally negligent homicide, the defendant has engaged in some other “risk creating” behavior in addition to driving faster than the posted speed limit (**compare** *People v Haney*, 30 NY2d 328 [defendant was speeding on city street and failed to stop at red light before killing pedestrian crossing street with green light in her favor]; *People v Soto*, 44 NY2d 683 [defendant, who was speeding and drag racing on city street, struck and killed driver stopped at red light]; *People v Ricardo B.*, 73 NY2d 228 [defendant was drag racing at between 70 and 90 miles per hour on a busy metropolitan street, ran a red light and struck vehicle crossing intersection with light in its favor]; *People v Loughlin*, 76 NY2d 804, 807 [intoxicated defendant was speeding on obstructed street under construction in residential neighborhood in Queens]; *People v Maker*, 79 NY2d 978, 980 [intoxicated defendant drove at speeds of 50 to 100 miles per hour in 35 miles per hour zone in Manhattan, disobeying several traffic signals]; *People v Harris*, 81 NY2d 850, 851-852 [“defendant, while legally intoxicated, drove his motor vehicle in the dark of night from a public highway into an unfamiliar farmer’s field, accelerated at times to a speed approximating 50 miles per hour, intermittently operated the vehicle without headlights, and suddenly and forcefully drove through a hedgerow of small trees and shrubs, not knowing what obstacles and dangers lurked on the other side”]; *People v Ladd*, 89 NY2d 893, 894-895 [intoxicated defendant driving on wrong side of a foggy road at 4:30 A.M.], **with** *People v Perry*, 123 AD2d 492, 493 [4th Dept 1986], *affd* 70 NY2d 626 [no criminal negligence present where defendant was driving approximately 80 miles per hour in a 55 miles per hour zone ‘on a rural road, on a dark night,’ struck a utility pole, and killed two passengers; defendant’s “conduct . . .d(id) not constitute a gross deviation from the ordinary standard of care held by those who share the community’s general sense of right and wrong” (citations omitted)]). The question [is whether the conduct]

constituted “not only a failure to perceive a risk of death, but also some serious blameworthiness in the conduct that caused it” (*Boutin*, 75 NY2d at 696).

Cabrera, at 377-378, emphasis added, all material in square brackets in original.

In *People v Badke*, 21 Misc3d 471 (Suffolk Co Ct 2008), the court dismissed criminally negligent homicide counts, finding insufficient the grand jury evidence that defendant drove at excessive speed with passengers in his car, collided with another vehicle, and caused the deaths of three passengers. The court said, “Criminal negligence requires some additional affirmative act by the defendant to transform speeding into dangerous speeding, that is, conduct by which the defendant exhibits the kind of seriously blameworthy carelessness whose seriousness would be apparent to anyone who shares the community’s general sense of right and wrong.” 21 Misc3d at 476.

The evidence in this investigation does not meet the standard the courts have set for proof of dangerous speeding or other “seriously blameworthy conduct.” Examples of “dangerous speeding” include running a red light while racing another car on a busy city street, *People v Ricardo B*, 73 NY2d 228 (1989); driving drunk in Manhattan while going 25 to 50 mph over the speed limit and disobeying traffic signs, *People v Maher*, 79 NY2d 978 (1989); and driving through a red light at 52 miles per hour, *People v Haney*, 30 NY2d 328 (1972). In contrast, in *People v. Perry*, 23 AD2d 492 (4th Dept 1986), *affd*, 70 NY2d 626 (1987), a court overturned a conviction where the defendant was driving at night and going 25 mph over the speed limit on a rural road when he struck a utility pole and killed a passenger, holding that such “conduct d[id] not constitute a gross deviation from the ordinary standard of care held by those who share the community’s general sense of right and wrong.” Similarly, in *People v Badke*, 21 Misc3d 471, 477-78 (Suffolk Co Ct 2008), a court dismissed an indictment when the evidence failed to show “any other factor in addition to speed [that] convert[ed] Mr. Badke’s actions to dangerous speeding.”

Like *Badke* and *Perry*, the evidence does not establish that Sgt. Mendez’s conduct consisted of “seriously blameworthy conduct” or that his car’s speed was “dangerous speeding.” There is no evidence that Sgt. Mendez was under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and he was not on his cell phone prior to the collision.

Based on the investigation, OSI concludes that a prosecutor would not be able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Sgt. Mendez committed a crime when he caused Mr. Christy’s death. Therefore, OSI will not seek charges against him and closes the matter with the issuance of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Monticello Police Department and Sullivan County Sheriff's Office should equip officers with body-worn cameras.

OSI consistently recommends that police departments equip officers with body-worn cameras (BWCs). Here, none of the responding officers were equipped with a BWC, and there was no video evidence from third party cameras that captured this incident. Had the officers been equipped with BWCs, the videos likely would have captured Sgt. Mendez's condition and what he said to responding officers in the minutes after the incident, and a BWC would have captured Deputy Mitchell administer the portable breathalyzer to Sgt. Mendez. BWCs would have facilitated the investigation of this case and provided the public with greater transparency into the police investigation. MPD and SCSO leadership told OSI their agencies could not afford to equip their officers with BWCs.

As set forth more fully in OSI's Annual Report (link below), the Legislature has not taken action to require that police departments equip their officers with and require them to use BWCs and dashboard cameras. OSI continues to urge the Legislature to pass such a bill, and to include in it funding for any police agency that would not otherwise be able to afford the implementation of a BWC and dashboard camera program. In OSI's view, legislation requiring the use of video would effectively respond to the public's concerns about policing. Video enhances transparency, and transparency enhances trust. When policing is good, video will show that. When policing is not good, video will be the key to a meaningful response, including more reliable investigations and, as appropriate, improvements in policies and training, well-founded disciplinary decisions, and, in the most serious cases, criminal charges.

(OSI 2025 Annual Report: [20251001-2025-osi-annual-report.pdf](#))

OAG recommends SCSO hold officers of all police agencies to the same standards as civilians and conduct impartial investigations.

Sgt. Mendez was operating an unregistered, uninspected motor vehicle with no front license plates when he struck Mr. Christy. SCSO had the authority to ticket Sgt. Mendez the evening of the incident and seize the vehicle. It was apparent the night of the incident that Mr. Christy suffered serious physical injury. No officer from MPD or SCSO thoroughly inspected Sgt. Mendez's vehicle, made efforts to examine the event data recorder for any information it might contain from the collision, or requested assistance from an outside agency with officers trained in collision reconstruction. SCSO allowed Sgt. Mendez to drive the unregistered, uninspected vehicle that had struck Mr. Christy away from the scene that evening. SCSO did not issue Sgt. Mendez any tickets that evening; it wasn't until members of SCSO learned that Mr. Christy was in critical condition and not likely to survive that SCSO ticketed Sgt. Mendez.

It seems unlikely that SCSO would have allowed a civilian operating a vehicle with a registration more than a year and a half expired to drive away from the scene of a serious physical injury motor vehicle collision.

Valuable evidence may have been lost due to SCSO's failure to conduct a thorough inspection of the vehicle, seize the vehicle as evidence in the investigation, and make efforts to request the assistance of the NYSP Collision Reconstruction Unit. When OSI was notified five days after the incident, there was insufficient evidence to articulate probable cause required to obtain a search warrant to seize the Acura and conduct a thorough vehicle inspection and examination of the contents of the event data recorder. OSI's only option was to request Sgt. Mendez's consent but, through his attorney, he refused to allow OSI or SCSO to inspect the vehicle or examine its event data recorder contents. Holding police officers of all agencies accountable for their violations of the law and to the same standards civilians are held assures the public that law enforcement receives no special treatment in an investigation into one of its members.

Dated: September 28, 2026