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DISTRICT ATTORNEY ERIC R. LINHARDT'S REMARKS FROM SENTENCING HEARING
COMMONWEALTH V. JONATHAN DEPRENDA
AUGUST 6, 2015

For James Robinson's family, this has been a long and difficult 17 months. Despite the extraordinary loss they have suffered, never once did I hear a word of vengeance or anger from the Robinson family. Instead, what were shared with me were words of forgiveness and recognition that although officer Deprenda's actions that night were reckless, ultimately James' death was unintentional.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly commend the Pennsylvania State Police for the professionalism they have shown throughout. Being called upon to investigate a fellow law enforcement officer is never easy. But they have sworn an oath to uphold the law. Our responsibility is to seek the truth and ensure justice for the victim's family. We have done so.

It is true that those of us in law enforcement have a responsibility to each other. Unfortunately, on January 12, 2014, as officer Deprenda raced to that emergency call, he forgot law enforcement's most important responsibility; his responsibility to protect and assure the safety of the public.

As those of us who work in the criminal justice system know, a defendant's actions routinely affect people beyond themselves. Officer Deprenda's decision that night had tragic consequences, not only for himself and James Robinson, but also the Robinson and Deprenda families.

To say there are no winners here may be cliché, but it is also true. Without James, the lives of the Robinson family have been forever changed. For Jonathan Deprenda, this is no longer the life he had planned for himself, his wife or his 2 young sons. If you ask Mr. Deprenda, I think he would tell you that he was meant to be a police officer. And quite frankly, I can tell you, officer Deprenda was one of the good ones. He will no longer be a police officer, and now he will carry with him a criminal record.

The plea arrangement that has been made today has been made with the agreement of both the Robinson family and the Pennsylvania State Police. For the Robinson family, to hear officer Deprenda say today that he is sorry is more important and far more meaningful to them than any jail sentence we could have demanded, or the Court could impose.

It is, for all of these reasons, we respectfully request this Court to abide by the terms of this agreement.