



KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE

STATE ATTORNEY

**ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FHP Trooper Found Guilty of Official Misconduct

Miami –April 22, 2022 – Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle announces that today, Highway Patrol Officer Manny Lazaro Melendez was found guilty of two felony counts of Official Misconduct, each a third degree felony.

“When there is an intentional and purposeful misstatement in any portion of police report, even something as seemingly small as the date, issues of credibility and truth are at issue. That is why the charges of Official Misconduct were originally filed against Officer Manny Lazaro Melendez,” said State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “Today’s guilty verdict proves that Melendez’ action in changing the dates on his Highway Patrol accident reports not only harmed the legal rights of the victims but harmed his personal future far more severely than the agency reprimand he sought to avoid.”

Trooper Melendez falsified the dates to avoid internal disciplinary action. Florida Statutes require accident/crash reports to be filed within 10 days of a traffic accident. The defendant was concerned that he had waited over 1 month to complete one of the accident/crash reports and he had waited over 2 months to complete a second accident/crash report. He wanted to avoid internal disciplinary action. While violation of the Florida Statute mandating an accident/report be filed within 10 days of a traffic accident is not a criminal offense, to knowingly falsify any information in an accident/crash report is a crime; to wit: Official Misconduct, a third degree felony.

Melendez was found guilty of two 3rd degree felonies and was sentenced to one year of probation with the special condition of his probation that he successfully complete 40 hours of community service at a local church. It is anticipated that the FDLE licensing authorities will revoke the defendant’s certification as a law enforcement officer, and this will mean the defendant will not be able to be hired by another law enforcement agency. The defendant’s family has a history of involvement in law enforcement as police officers.

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FOR FURTHER
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