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### Police get warrant to test driver's blood in fatal crash

3:31 PM Fri, Feb 12, 2010 | [Permalink](#)

Kate Bramson  [Email](#)

By Amanda Milkovits  
Journal Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- The driver of an SUV that crashed into two Brown University students, killing one and injuring another, is under arrest on felony drunken driving charges.

The man, whose name has not yet been released, was charged Friday afternoon with driving under the influence, death resulting, and driving under the influence, serious bodily injury, said Lindsay Richardson, a spokeswoman for the Providence Police Department.

The man is expected to be arraigned at 4:30 p.m. at the station, said Michael J. Healey, a spokesman for the attorney general's office.

The two Brown students were in a break-down lane at Hope and Thayer streets, by Barnes Street, just before 2 a.m. on Friday, when they were struck by a 2010 Subaru Forester, said Officer Thomas Connetta.

Avi Schaefer, 21, a freshman from Santa Barbara, Calif., was pronounced dead at Rhode Island Hospital, said Officer Tom Connetta. Marika Baltscheffsky, 19, an exchange student from Sweden, was treated at Rhode Island Hospital for serious injuries, and later released.

The driver and passenger of the car that struck them, whom the police have not identified, were not injured.

After the driver refused a test for alcohol, the police obtained a warrant to take blood samples to determine whether there was alcohol in his blood, said police Commander Paul Kennedy.

This is the first time that a new law allowing the police to compel motorists involved in serious or deadly crashes to undergo blood-alcohol testing, said assistant attorney general Stacey Veroni, chief of the criminal division.

Schaefer's past experience serving in the Israel Defense Forces eventually led him to the Providence Police Department, where he told the chief he was interested in sharing his training in firearms.

Police Chief Dean M. Esserman said he first met the young man during the summer of 2008, when Schaefer was considering attending Brown University.

Schaefer returned again last fall and asked Esserman if he could meet with the department's SWAT team.

Capt. Keith Tucker said Schaefer joined the SWAT team at the range several times in September and October, to talk about training and to shoot at the range.

"He was eager to share his knowledge and to share different ideas about Israeli army tactics versus American law enforcement," Tucker said.

Esserman said he called Tucker after learning about Schaefer's death and asked him to inform the SWAT team. "They were taken aback by it," Esserman said. "To think of all he'd been through and seen" as a member of the Israel army. And then, the chief said, to die on the streets of Providence.

(This entry was first posted at 7:22 a.m. and updated at 12:53 p.m.)



## Comments

Carol DeCanio said:

This is what irresponsibility can do.  
To drink beyond limit.  
To get into a car as if it were safe.  
To drive what turns into a weapon.  
To kill someone who can only be a unique benefit in our complicated world.  
To still try to duck responsibility by refusing a test for alcohol.  
And, to bring an unrelenting degree of misery, to hundreds of people, than they had before.

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 2:51 PM  
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Navy Gunner said:

What a waste...kudos to the PPD for pursuing the warrant to obtain the blood sample. How much do you want to bet that this is not the first alcohol related incident for this driver?

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 3:58 PM  
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Mike Hogan said:

Agree with Carol above - what an awful tragedy. As a Brown student myself (though abroad for the semester), I am horrified that this has happened right on our campus.

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 4:05 PM  
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K. W. said:

I go to Brown and this happened around 9 or 10 in the morning. How was this guys still drunk at 9 in the morning? I hope he gets life in jail. Our community is in mourning over this senseless act.

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 4:45 PM  
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a shame said:

What a shame! Drinking and driving aside, this could have likely been avoided if these people were not walking in the street. Why were they walking in the street? I'll bet the sidewalks were not shoveled and that had something to do with them being in the street, although many brown students often seem to have difficulty with common sense as pedestrians and/or bicyclists.

No matter what, get off your lazy behinds and shovel the sidewalks, and fire-hydrants, in front of your home or business. Those who don't should be liable for any pedestrian injured walking in the road in front of their property. Not shoveling out the hydrants is just plain stupid. If my house is burning I want the Fire Dept to be able to find and use that hydrant as quickly as possible.

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A Sadowsky said:

This is an absolute tragedy, especially because the world will never realize what Avi Schaefer could have accomplished. Thanks to this driver's senseless, self-centered and destructive act, we are deprived of Avi, who seemed committed to his community (evidenced by the offer to help the Providence police above) and to continuing the dialogue that will form the basis for peace in the Middle East, as seen in the op-ed he did at Brown:

<http://bit.ly/927Shs>

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 5:16 PM

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Treat our own vets as well said:

What is the big deal that the guy was in the Israeli army? If he had been in the US army would he have been shooting with the PVD SWAT team and "sharing his training?" We should treat our own veterans as well; they also have "been through a lot."

And why compare army tactics with garden variety law enforcement?

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 5:36 PM

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not guilty yet said:

Just remember the driver of the other car is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 6:05 PM

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Orange\_Fan said:

To K.W. -

Please read the ENTIRE article - "**...were in a break-down lane at Hope and Thayer streets, by Barnes Street, just before 2 a.m. on Friday...**"

My condolences to the entire Brown Community for this tragic loss...

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 6:33 PM

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Liberal formerly a Democrat said:

I wonder if the old South African whites "shared their training" in keeping down the "natives."

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 6:48 PM

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Anonymous said:

the last two posters should feel lucky there's a first amendment... cause if there wasn't I'd personally see to it that you guys get locked up for posting that nonsense after a wonderful man tragically lost his life. RIP Avi!!!

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 6:58 PM

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bh said:

KW, it happened at around 2 a.m. Does Brown teach reading? You might want to take a class richie rich...

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 8:19 PM

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Sanity\_instead\_of\_technicalities said:

One person is dead. Another person seriously injured. Don't be that person who posts just to say the contrarian view. It wastes space. For the post before, how about starting a "teaching veterans how to spell" group? You can be its first member.

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 8:35 PM

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Ruscha Robbins said:

I knew this fine man, this lovely person with a good and kind heart. He was loved by so many and will be missed by so many. I wish we could rewind time and take the keys out of the driver's hand - I wish we could bring Avi back. So many hearts are broken, so many tears are being cried.

[Link](#) | February 12, 2010 9:49 PM  
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fed up said:

I'm completely amazed this "a shame" dope wants to throw drinking and driving aside and talk about shoveling the sidewalks. You have to be kidding. I.....I can't believe this person sat in front of his computer and read this story and then had the nerve to complain about snow on the sidewalks. It pales in comparison to the tragic ending for this man's life. A shame.....you really ought to be ashamed!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

[Link](#) | February 13, 2010 12:22 AM  
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Tom Levron said:

There was no other car involved. the car hit them while they were crossing the street. RIP my dear friend I love you so much and we will all miss you. I beg anyone that reads this, please drive responsibly and don't drink and drive so no one else would have to suffer such lose.

RIP Avi.

[Link](#) | February 13, 2010 4:34 AM  
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CW said:

KW- this happened at 2:00 in the morning.

[Link](#) | February 13, 2010 7:28 AM  
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j said:

to "k.w." - the article plainly states this happened at 2 in the morning. my bus route goes right through that intersection b/t 9 and 10 - it definitely didn't happen then.

i certainly agree with "a shame" - i'm always on edge about the lack of shoveling around the east side in particular. several people died in the past couple winters because they were walking in the road and were hit by cars - not just drunk drivers, but plows as well - because the sidewalks were not cleared. according to city ordinance this is something that homeowners can be fined for - and police should absolutely enforce this.

i walk by that intersection all the time on my way home from work, and i try to walk as far away from the road as possible (on the far edge of the sidewalk) - so many drunk drivers, many of them students, on their way to/from bars on thayer or their housing, swerving, honking horns, and screaming.

[Link](#) | February 13, 2010 8:50 AM  
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Marcia Spindell said:

It is amazing how much distortion came through in comments.

1st, it is a tragedy that anyone dies from a drunken driver!

2ndly, Avi was a brave, industrious, bight young man; and going through any army training builds strength, character and discipline.

3rdly, Consider his death from this perspective: What if he was your son, brother, nephew, or even uncle? What about the initiatives he started and how he gave back to his school, local and global communities?

Lastly, let's send healing thoughts and feelings to all that loved and knew him.

[Link](#) | February 14, 2010 10:36 AM  
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his good friend said:

i think your comments are incredibly selfish and insensitive. Please remember Avi is someone's son, brother, bestfriend, and love. He truly meant more to be then anything and your comment upset me beyond belief.

[Link](#) | February 15, 2010 1:23 AM  
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Shavit Haro said:

Avi advocated peace in dialogue. Let us remember that and dissist this kind of talk between people seen above in comments to one another. Hate and frustration to not advance of forward. Optimism, Compassion and Wisdom are the choices we must make in order to push us towards a greater world.

Love you Avi Ach Sheli...

[Link](#) | February 24, 2010 6:01 PM  
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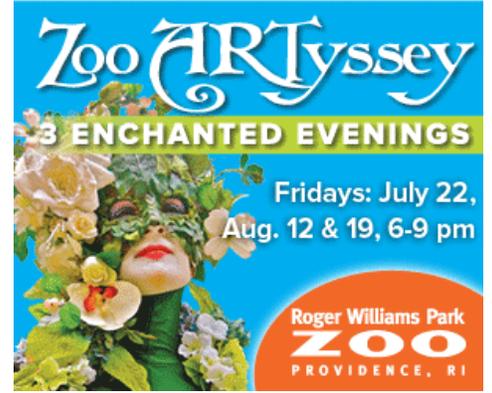
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