

Former Hadley Police Officer Sentenced For Using Excessive Force And Obstructing Investigation

A former Hadley Police Department officer was sentenced on Thursday, June 20, in federal court in Springfield for using unreasonable force during an arrest and then falsifying a police report of the incident.

Christopher M. Roeder, 50, of Agawam, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Mark G. Mastroianni to 14 months in prison and one year of supervised release. In February 2019, after a week-long trial, a federal jury found Roeder guilty of one count of deprivation of rights under color of law and one count of falsification of a document.

Evidence presented at trial established that, on April 3, 2017, Roeder struck an arrestee in the face without legal justification, while the arrestee was seated on a bench in the Hadley Police Department booking area. The strike fractured the arrestee's nose in multiple places and required surgery to repair. Roeder subsequently attempted to obstruct the investigation into his assault of the arrestee by falsifying his police report describing the incident.

"Officers aren't only expected to enforce the law in their communities, they are expected to follow it themselves," said U.S. Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. "In this case, an officer broke a man's nose for no legitimate purpose and then, in an effort to cover up the attack, falsified official documents about the incident. This behavior is unacceptable in someone entrusted with protecting the public safety."

"Law enforcement officers are sworn to uphold and defend the

laws of our nation,” said Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband. “Roeder abused his power and violated the constitutional rights of an arrestee, eroding the public’s trust in law enforcement. The Department of Justice will continue to hold law enforcement officers accountable for their actions.”

“As a police officer sworn to uphold the law, Mr. Roeder’s conduct deliberately abused the authority bestowed upon him, undermining the integrity of our criminal justice system,” said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Office. “The overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers perform their duties with dedication and integrity, putting their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe. This case illustrates the FBI’s commitment and ability to address isolated incidents where officers betray the badge and the public’s trust.”

U.S. Attorney Lelling, Assistant Attorney General Dreiband, and FBI Boston SAC Bonavolonta made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Deepika Bains Shukla, Chief of Lelling’s Springfield Branch Office, and Trial Attorney Timothy Visser of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division prosecuted the case.