



COMMON GROUND

OCTOBER 2024 ISSUE

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SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 2024

Greetings,

Welcome to another edition of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department newsletter: The Common Ground.

In this issue, we present a diverse range of topics, stories, and updates, beginning with highlights of our participation in the 48th Annual Training Conference of NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives), held in New Orleans, Louisiana from August 9th to August 13th. The conference focused on the importance of representation in law enforcement leadership, discussing critical topics such as community outreach initiatives, leadership forums, professional development workshops, and more. I and our SCSD representatives were honored to be part of these important conversations.

We also highlight another member of our leadership team, Suffolk County Jail Assistant Superintendent Lateya Flambo, with our "Employee Profile."

As October marks Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we bring attention to this critical issue with an interview featuring our new Director of Women's Programming, Jennifer Wolter. As the Co-Founder and former Coordinator of the S.A.F.E.R. (Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Re-entry) Program here at the Department, Jennifer speaks about the devastating impacts of domestic violence and sexual assault, and provides information about available resources.

We also turn the spotlight on the critically important work around safety and operations that is carried out by our mailroom staff at both the Suffolk County Jail and Suffolk County House of Correction. In addition, we bring you two stories about our CGI Program, focusing on our Urban Farm initiative and one of our most recent carpentry projects.

Finally, this issue's Around Suffolk County installment showcases just a few of our community outreach initiatives including our Senior ID Program in Mattapan, our participation in Winthrop Open Recreation for local children, a Touch-A-Truck event in Revere, and our work with the Healthy Room Project in Roxbury.

I hope that you'll enjoy reading these and other stories in this issue, and I look forward to bringing you more insight and information about the form and functions of the Department in the editions to come.

- Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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SHERIFF, DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATE IN NOBLE NATIONAL CONFERENCE



From August 9-13, 2024, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department participated in the 48th Annual Training Conference and Exhibition of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), held in New Orleans, LA. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, NOBLE serves as a beacon of justice in the law enforcement community, dedicated to redefining public safety by fostering inclusivity and advancing diverse leadership in the field.

Representing our Department were Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, Special Sheriff Abiezer Ayuso, Chief Civil Deputy Kenneth Pires, Captain Christina Chaney, Captain Tony Lee, Chief of Staff Lakia Jones, Chief Human Resources Officer Anthony Mosley, among others.

The conference provided a valuable platform for our team to engage with over 2,000 law enforcement professionals from across the nation. Attendees participated in a range of activities, including professional development workshops, leadership forums, and community outreach initiatives. These experiences offered critical insights into effective strategies and innovative practices in law enforcement.

Special Sheriff Abe Ayuso weighed in on what lessons stuck out to him as most profound.

"I found the course on financial literacy for officers incredibly important, as it taught us listeners how to plan for retirement after years of working the force. Implementing these lessons in the curriculum of our training can help safeguard our staff's futures."

A key focus of the conference was the importance of Black representation in law enforcement leadership. The event underscored how uplifting historically marginalized voices is essential for addressing contemporary challenges and fostering positive community relations.

Sheriff Steven Tompkins noted, "It's important to connect not only with the diverse voices represented within Suffolk County, but around the nation as well. As a community, we owe it to the people we serve – and to ourselves – to continue educating and self-improving. What better way to learn than through each other, as we offer unique perspectives into law enforcement and governance shaped by the locale of our jurisdiction."

Our staff's participation in prestigious cultural events such as these demonstrates the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's commitment to advancing excellence in law enforcement through inclusive representation. We thank NOBLE for the insights and experiences gained in the last conference, which will continue to play a crucial role in enhancing our strategies and strengthening our service.





EMPLOYEE PROFILE: ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT LETEYA FLAMBO

Assistant Superintendent Leteya Flambo has been the picture of resilience during her career in law enforcement. Her journey, marked by a number of impressive promotions while persevering through adversity, is a testament to her leadership and adaptability.

Since her arrival to the Department in 2001, Assistant Superintendent (AS) Flambo's leadership capabilities have resulted in a steady climb through the ranks, with her trajectory markedly accelerating in 2019 with her promotion to Lieutenant, to Captain in 2022, and from Captain to Assistant Superintendent earlier this year.

April of 2024 marked a pivotal moment in her career, as she was promoted to AS of Operations at the Suffolk County Jail. Reflecting on her new position, she shared how the pace of her promotions initially took her by surprise, but her unwavering dedication to the mission of SCSD motivated her to embrace each new challenge with enthusiasm. "In the last four years, it all just picked up," she said, acknowledging the rapid growth in her responsibilities.

AS Flambo also emphasized the importance of staying true to oneself, particularly

for those aspiring to follow a similar career path. She recalled moments in the early stages of her career where she felt like she didn't fit the mold, but urged others to find peace with standing out.

"You have to be okay with not being like everybody else," she explained. Over time, what others once perceived as a weakness became one of her greatest strengths — a perspective reinforced by mentors like former Superintendent Colwell, who recognized her unique qualities and their value to the Department.

However, her journey has not been without challenges. Following a serious health setback, Flambo chose to return to work sooner than expected, reflecting her determination to support her team and the community.

"I realized how much I missed being here, being part of something bigger than myself," she explained. "There's always a need for compassion and guidance, and I wanted to be available for my colleagues and the people we serve."

Flambo's leadership style emphasizes collaboration and inclusivity.

"I believe in creating an environment where everyone feels valued," she stated. "When team members feel respected and heard, it elevates our collective efforts." This approach has fostered a culture of mutual respect and open communication within her team, essential elements for effective policing.

AS Flambo is also committed to mentoring the next generation of law enforcement professionals.

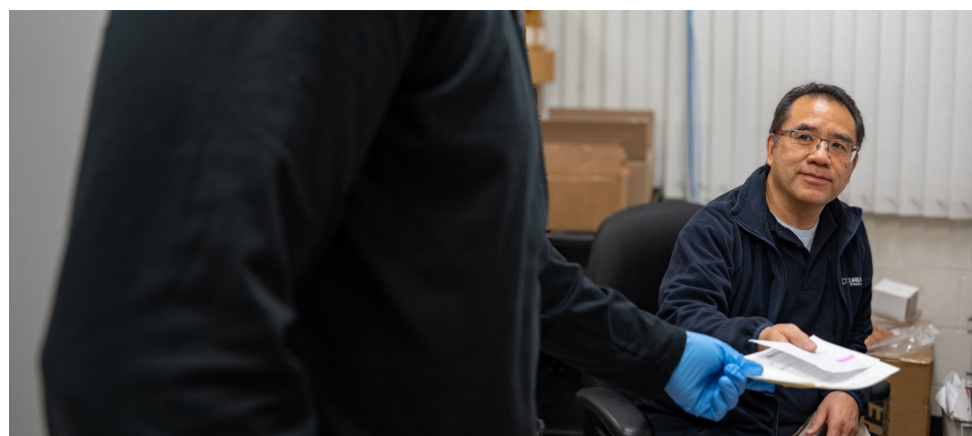
"I want to inspire others to find their passion within this field," she said. "It's vital that we cultivate future leaders who are compassionate and driven to make a difference."

As she continues to lead with integrity and vision, AS Flambo sets a powerful example for her colleagues and the community, demonstrating that true strength lies in a commitment to serve — a lesson she brings with her from her personal journeys and faith-driven beliefs. When asked about her excitement given the new position, Flambo remarked that she remains focused on the future.

"There's always more to learn, more to give back," she affirmed. "My experiences have taught me that every challenge is an opportunity for growth."

Her story is not just about personal achievement; it is about fostering a culture of empowerment within the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. Thank you, AS Flambo for upholding your duty to the Suffolk County Jail. We look forward to the growth of the Department under your leadership.

A LOOK INSIDE: SCSD'S MAILROOMS



Each week at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, a wide variety of mail and delivery items enter through the doors of our facilities – the Suffolk County Jail and the Suffolk County House of Correction.

The mailroom operates as an essential lifeline, connecting people in our care and custody to their loved ones and the outside world. Managing such a large volume of material, like money orders, legal mail, regular mail, UPS packages, books, and magazines, among other items, requires precision and organization. The SCSD mailrooms are critical hubs for security, efficiency, and communication and play a pivotal role in ensuring both inmate connectivity and the Department's safety.

Just prior to transitioning out of the Department for another employment opportunity out of state, Rashawn spoke about his six years working in the mailroom at the Jail as the Administrative Assistant for Mailroom and Personnel, stating that as part of an unbreakable routine, he adhered to strict regulations, noting that if anything posed a safety risk, it was immediately rejected. When running the mailroom, safety was always top of mind for Rashawn, who coordinated with various divisions to identify and report any risks.

"I'm the first line of defense when it comes to any mail entering the jail," said Rashawn. From the wearing of gloves and masks to handling potentially hazardous materials, Rashawn takes every precaution to protect staff and detainees alike.

In addition to his responsibility of meticulous organization and handling of all mail entering the jail, Rashawn also worked in collaboration with the Social Services Department and Assistant Deputy Superintendent (ADS) Carlos Goulart to keep inmates updated on key information, such as the ballot elections.

"We make sure that they know about the election sign-up sheets and any other important information," he noted.

Meanwhile, at the House of Correction, another crucial operation takes place under the guidance of Correction Officer Dave Maggio, who has been working in service of the Department for over nineteen years. His main responsibility is to handle all incoming and outgoing mail, and ensuring that each piece is meticulously sorted and scrutinized.

"On a typical shift, I deal with all the mail that comes in—whether it's for the inmates or another part of the facility," Dave shared. "Certainly, we're responsible for screening certain items that present a security risk to the Department or pose a health threat for the inmates."

Inspecting all digital content, such as pictures and videos sent to inmates' tablets is also part of their duties, thus preventing anything inappropriate or harmful from entering the facility. This constant vigilance makes the mailroom not just a

communication hub, but a vital checkpoint for the Department's safety.

In the HOC mailroom, Dave and his partner S. Tejada work closely with the Sheriff's Investigative Division (SID) to prevent the introduction of drugs or contraband through outside correspondence. Their daily coordination with the Jail mailroom is vital when exchanging mail between facilities, particularly for inmates/detainees transferred between locations.

"We get a team from the jail every morning to exchange mail for guys that have been moved over here," Dave explains.

Both Rashawn and Dave spoke of the pride taken in the work they've done. For inmates and detainees, staying connected with the outside world through letters and packages is a key part of maintaining emotional stability. For the staff, ensuring the safety and security of these communications is of equal importance.

Whether it's sorting legal mail, processing money orders, or handling personal photos and letters, the mailroom staff at both the Jail and the HOC play a crucial role in the Department's overall operations—it's a critical link between the inside and the outside, fostering connection, maintaining safety, and supporting the Department's mission of care and safety for all.



SCSD'S URBAN FARM PROGRAM CULTIVATES SKILLS, HOPE



The primary mission of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Urban Farm Program is to equip the participating incarcerated individuals with practical knowledge that they can use after their release, while also offering them the benefit of time spent in the fresh air, outside of their cells and units.

One of the Department's partners in the program, the New Garden Society, is dedicated to providing participants with valuable horticultural and gardening skills

In this collaboration between partners, participants learn how to grow, harvest, and understand the lifecycle of various vegetables, gaining hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture. The program is a welcome break from the confines of their units, bringing a sense of accomplishment and wellbeing. Participants meet twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, and operate on a seasonal schedule, beginning in May and continuing through November, with new members joining at the midway point. The program takes place in the CGI Urban Farm setting, where participants cultivate a wide variety of crops, including tomatoes, eggplants, strawberries, watermelon, cucumbers, basil, potatoes, brocco-



li, and various types of lettuce, among others. Flowers are also grown for a beautification purposes around the facility. As the season ends, valuable plants are potted for the next year, ensuring continuity.



Upon completion of the program at the end of season, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department typically donates the majority of its harvest to food pantries and partners like Project Paulie and Casa Myrna, an organization that supports women who have experienced domestic violence. While some of the produce is also used in the Department's facility's kitchen, the bulk is given to this important cause to contribute positively to the community.

Captain Brinson, who has been the Director of the CGI program for the past two years, oversees the Urban Farming program in addition to the other courses and programs offered by CGI. He believes strongly in the program's value, noting, "I think that it benefits the incarcerated population here tremendously. I see a difference in the individuals that participate in the programs, and it's all positive."





CARPENTRY PROGRAM BUILDS SKILLS, FOUNDATION FOR POSITIVE CHANGE



The Common Ground Institute (CGI) is designed with a clear mission: to equip inmates with basic carpentry, painting, electrical, and landscaping skills that prepare them for reentry into society. In addition, the program ensures that while they're incarcerated, individuals are not just sitting stagnant, but are instead gaining valuable knowledge, experience and skills that will help them upon their release.

Participants in CGI experience several positive impacts. Not only do they have the benefit of getting out of their units and interacting with staff, but they also learn how to use various tools and equipment essential to the building, construction, carpentry, painting and landscaping process. While the program also fosters interaction and provides meaningful activities, which participants truly appreciate, it also delivers focused instruction and hands-on experience.

One of the notable projects recently completed by the program was the construction of a new shed, which took ten intensive weeks to complete. This shed serves multiple purposes, such as providing shelter, especially during adverse weather, and also offers storage space, and serves as a drying area for harvested vegetables. The shed is primarily used by female inmates engaged in gardening

activities, providing them with an extra space to work and attend gardening classes.

The carpentry portion of the program is structured over seven weeks, with a balanced approach to classroom and hands-on learning. Mornings are dedicated to classroom time, where participants are instructed on aspects of safety, which allows them to eventually earn their OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) certification. This takes place three days a week, while the remaining two days focuses on financial literacy. The afternoons are reserved for hands-on work, including shed construction, deck building, framing, and even basic electrical work.

In addition to larger projects like the shed, male individuals participating in the program also contribute to daily tasks around the House of Correction. They regularly engage in painting, landscaping, planting flowers, and doing general maintenance, contributing to the upkeep and beautification of the facilities. Classes not only provide incarcerated population with new skills but also instill a sense of purpose and accomplishment, making a significant difference in their lives as they prepare for reentry into society as people who are better able to care for themselves and their families through the newfound skills they've acquired in the program.



RAISING AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT:

AN INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER WOLTER



As the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department observes October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we encourage you to delve into the ongoing battle against domestic violence and sexual assault. In this exclusive interview, Director of Women's Program Services, Jennifer Wolter offers an insightful perspective on the plight of survivors and how communities can play a vital role in providing support.

Before assuming her current role as the Director of Women's Program Services, Jennifer served as the SAFER (Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Re-entry) Program Coordinator at the House of Correction, a program launched in the summer of 2018 by RESPOND, Inc., an agency dedicated to ending domestic violence.

"I work with detainees or inmates who have experienced abuse, providing both individual services and group support as they work through the trauma of their past," Jennifer shared. With more than a decade of experience, Jennifer has seen firsthand the devastating impact of domestic violence and sexual assault on individuals and communities.

"These issues are an epidemic, not just in the U.S. but worldwide," she stated. "Raising awareness is crucial because domestic violence is so pervasive, affecting people from all walks of life, regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, or culture. Without awareness and active involvement, the numbers will continue to rise."

Sharing a sobering statistic, Jennifer said, "On average, one in three women and one in four men experience some type of physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime."

Despite the work of organizations like RESPOND Inc., which has been fighting to end domestic violence for over 50 years, the numbers remain alarmingly high. In her role within SAF-



ER, Jennifer was dedicated to offering holistic support to survivors within the correctional system. Since 2018, SAFER has provided full-time services to the House of Correction.

"With SAFER, we continued to provide a nine-session domestic violence class and have added a weekly support group for those staying longer," Jennifer explained. "Individually, we focus on listening to survivors' stories, offering emotional support, and safety planning for when they return to the community."

She also highlighted the importance of connecting survivors with resources like housing advocacy and continued group support, including a justice-involved survivor group specifically tailored to this population. Jennifer believes that part of healing involves reclaiming control, which is often stripped away in abusive situations.

"At the root of it, domestic violence and sexual assault are happening because someone wants control over another person. While many blame stress at work, drugs, mental health, and previous abuse issues as causes, the reality is that abuse stems from a deliberate choice to harm another person," she said.

She emphasized that awareness needs to extend beyond physical violence, recognizing that emotional manipulation, financial control, and other coercive behaviors can be equally damaging.

"The impact on survivors is profound—ranging

from long-term physical disabilities to psychological trauma, isolation, and legal and financial difficulties," Jennifer noted. These struggles can lead to further issues, such as substance abuse or incarceration, highlighting the need for comprehensive support services.

"Every minute, 24 people in the U.S. are physically or sexually assaulted or stalked by an intimate partner" Jennifer continued, underlining the magnitude of the issue.

Through SAFER and RESPOND Inc.'s other programs, Jennifer aims to equip survivors with the tools they need to heal and thrive.

"We want them to be healthier and safer when they return home," she said. Jennifer also spoke candidly about the importance of shifting societal perceptions around domestic violence and sexual assault.

"There is so much victim-blaming. Questions like 'What were you wearing?' or 'Why didn't you just leave?' place responsibility on the victim; all of this puts the onus back on the people who have already been victimized," she said. "We want survivors to know that we believe them. They are not responsible for the abuse they endured, and no one deserves to be harmed."

In closing, Jennifer offered a message of hope for survivors: "What happened to them is important and worth being heard, but it doesn't define them. There is always hope for healing, and they have the strength to not only stand up for themselves but also help others in this fight to end domestic violence and sexual assault."

As we continue to observe Domestic Violence Awareness Month, let's remember that each of us has a role to play in supporting survivors, raising awareness, and ultimately ending the cycle of abuse.



RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT:

- RESPOND INC: (617) 623-5900 | WWW.RESPONDINC.ORG
- BARCC (BOSTON AREA RAPE CRISIS CENTER): (800) 841-8371 | [HTTPS://BARCC.ORG](https://barcc.org)
- NATIONAL DV HOTLINE: (800) 799-7233 | WWW.THEHOTLINE.ORG | 24 HOURS
- SAFELINK (MA STATE DV HOTLINE): (877) 785-2020 | 24 HOURS
- RAINN (RAPE, ABUSE + INCEST NATIONAL NETWORK): (800) 656.HOPE (4673) | RAINN.ORG

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**SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS &
THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**



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AWARENESS
MONTH**

OCTOBER 2024

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BACK TO SCHOOL: SCSD'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION



As the summer draws to an end and the cool autumn winds approach, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) once again showed its commitment to the community by participating in a series of Back-to-School events across the county. These gatherings offer a chance for local students and families to connect with law enforcement officers, celebrate the start of a new academic year, and ensure that students have the resources they need to succeed.

Over the last month, members of the Department were present at various events, handing out school supplies and giving words of encouragement to students eager to begin their educational journeys. School visits were paid to Franklin D. Roosevelt, St. John Paul II Catholic Academy, and Sarah Greenwood Schools, in addition to several others. From the neighborhoods of Roxbury to Mattapan, Dorchester and beyond, SCSD's outreach aims to reinforce the importance of public safety in protecting educational spaces.

One of the highlights of these events is the focus on school preparedness. SCSD worked alongside local organizations and community leaders to provide essential supplies that many families may find difficult to afford. Notebooks, pencils, crayons, and other materials were distributed, ensuring that students of all ages were well-equipped to start their school year confidently.

Organized by the Massachusetts Association of Minority Law Enforcement Officers (M.A.M.L.E.O.), and in partnership with the Corey C. Griffin Foundation, SCSD joined the "Back-to-School BBQ and Backpack Supply" cookout in Dorchester Park at the end of August, distributing backpacks full of supplies to students in need. This effort aligns with the Department's broader mission to support the well-being and future success of young people across Suffolk County.

Beyond the material support, these events offered an opportunity for students and parents to engage with law enforcement in a positive and approachable environment. Officers took the time to chat with students about the excitement and challenges of returning to school, emphasizing the importance of staying focused, making good choices, and seeking help when needed.

Continuing Sheriff Tompkins' mission to inspire good choices amongst young scholars, the Communications and External Affairs Division has reinstated frequent visits to campuses across Suffolk County to present the Choice Program. The principles of Choice include anti-bullying tutelage, saying "no" to peer-pressure and substance use, internet safety, and more age-appropriate lessons.

Following the presentation given at the Franklin D. Roosevelt School in Hyde Park, Sergeant Stacey Wood weighed in, stating, "We want to equip young students with the foresight to learn the consequences of actions, that in turn cultivate a more successful future."

As the new school year begins, the SCSD's Back-to-School send-offs serve as a reminder of the Department's dedication to building stronger, safer communities by supporting the educational needs of its youngest members. Through continued outreach, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is helping to shape a brighter future for the leaders of tomorrow.



AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

SCSD OFFERS HELPING HANDS FOR HEALTHY ROOM PROJECT

On September 10th, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department teamed up with the Boston Police and Fire Departments to support the Healthy Room Project, transforming children's bedrooms from a family in need in Roxbury. The day involved painting, assembling furniture, and creating a welcoming space for the children, whose joy at the reveal was described as "priceless" by Sergeant Wood. Mark Kirunchyk, founder of the Healthy Room Project, emphasized the importance of giving back, highlighting how such efforts build connections between law enforcement and the community, leaving a lasting impact on the children and fostering positive relationships.



DEPARTMENT BRINGS SENIOR ID PROGRAM TO MATTAPAN

In a continued effort to support Suffolk County's senior population, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has been producing senior photo identification cards, which include vital health and emergency contact information, to help seniors in case of medical emergencies. By visiting senior centers and events, the department strengthens community ties while enhancing public safety. At the Mildred Avenue Community Center, officers collaborated with the Boston Police Department's District B-3 and local schools, arranging future programs aimed at community outreach. Boston Police Officer Derek Green emphasized the unified approach of local services in giving back to the seniors in their shared community.



SCSD ENGAGES WITH COMMUNITY AT REVERE TOUCH-A-TRUCK

At the invitation of Captain Amy O'Hara from the Revere Police Department, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department participated in the "Touch-A-Truck" event, organized by the City of Revere Parks & Recreation Department. The event gave local youth the chance to explore potential careers in public safety by offering hands-on experiences with various public service vehicles. SCSD staff, including Nichole Collins from the Medicated Assisted Treatment Program, Bernard Goulding from Special Investigations, and Sergeant Stacey Wood, connected with families and children, providing a tour of the department's transport van and insight into law enforcement operations.



DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATES IN WINTHROP OPEN RECREATION

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently participated in an Open Rec. event at the old Winthrop Middle School Gym, partnering with CASA and the Winthrop Police Department. The event offered local youth an evening of sports, games, and creative activities, such as basketball, soccer, football drills, and bracelet-making. Designed to foster positive relationships between kids and law enforcement, the initiative promotes healthy lifestyles, teamwork, and fun in a safe environment. Held every Friday from 6 to 8 p.m., it provides a proactive and engaging way for youth to spend their Friday nights with law enforcement.





**SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**



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