

Driver in fatal Seattle crash had string of DUI arrests, second chances

Court documents indicate that Mark W. Mullan — who was driving on a suspended license when he hit four members of a family, killing two of them — smelled of alcohol, failed field sobriety tests and had a preliminary blood-alcohol level of 0.22 percent.

By [Mike Carter](#) and [Sara Jean Green](#)

Seattle Times staff reporters

Mark W. Mullan has had a lot of second chances in his life.

His ex-wife took him back at least once, withdrawing divorce papers in 2004 to try to make things work. Disillusioned and frightened by his drinking and drugging, she went through with the separation and divorce five years later.

As a journeyman electrician, Mullan had a steady job at SME electrical contractors of Seattle, only to be fired twice for substance abuse, according to divorce filings. The company supported him through treatment, but let him go for good in 2003 when he stopped showing up at work.

And in January, Seattle city prosecutors treated a recent drunken-driving charge against Mullan as a first-time offense because his earlier DUI convictions were beyond the seven-year time frame in which the court can consider them when imposing a minimum sentence. At the time, Mullan also had a pending DUI in Snohomish County.

Judges in both Seattle and Snohomish County even said Mullan could drive, providing he installed an alcohol-sensitive ignition lock on his pickup. He never did.

On Monday, police say, the 50-year-old Mullan drove his black 2012 Chevrolet Silverado quad cab into a family on an afternoon walk in Seattle's Wedgwood neighborhood, killing Judy and Dennis Schulte and injuring their daughter-in-law and grandson. On Wednesday morning, Karina Ulriksen-Schulte, 33, and her 12-day-old son, Elias, remained in critical condition at Harborview Medical Center.

Court documents indicate that Mullan — who was driving on a suspended license — smelled of alcohol, failed field sobriety tests and had a preliminary blood-alcohol level of 0.22 percent, nearly three times the state's legal limit of 0.08 percent. King County District Court Judge Mark Chow on Tuesday ordered Mullan held in lieu of \$2.5 million bail for investigation of vehicular homicide and vehicular assault, \$500,000 above what prosecutors had sought.

Mullan told officers at the scene that he had had one drink earlier and that he hadn't seen the pedestrians because the sun was in his eyes, according to an affidavit that outlines the police case against him.

Attempts to contact Mullan's family were unsuccessful. On Monday night, a sister-in-law, Megan Mullan, described him as a kind man and good father who had struggled with substance abuse much of his life.

The father of two is a popular North Seattle baseball coach who was president of the North Seattle Baseball Association in 2009. He is no longer with the league.

Divorce records filed in 2003 by his ex-wife, a Seattle schoolteacher, paint Mullan as a chronic alcohol and drug abuser who routinely got behind the wheel while intoxicated and who had bragged that he had talked himself out of DUI arrests before.

Mullan has been arrested at least five times in Washington for driving under the influence. Three were in the early 1990s — two in Puyallup in 1990 and 1991, and one in 1994 in King County.

In the past six months, however, he's been arrested on suspicion of DUI twice.

Just before 11 a.m. on Oct. 8, he was stopped and arrested by a State Patrol trooper for driving his truck 84 mph in a 60 mph zone along the Alderwood Mall Parkway just off Interstate 5. Tests showed his blood-alcohol level was 0.15 percent.

On Christmas Day, he was arrested by Seattle police after he twice ran his truck into the Seals Motel on Aurora Avenue North, where he had been staying. Police wrote that he was so intoxicated he could not get out of his truck without the help of two officers.

Mullan also gave officers the name of his twin brother, something that court records indicate he has done before.

He was taken to the North Precinct, where his blood-alcohol level was measured at 0.32 percent, four times the legal limit. Officers were so concerned about his level of intoxication that they called paramedics to take Mullan to Harborview Medical Center.

Assistant City Attorney Rachel Cormier Anderson said Tuesday that Mullan pleaded guilty on Jan. 7 to what amounted to a first-offense DUI for that incident. She explained that the law does not allow prosecutors or the court to consider convictions further back than seven years when imposing a minimum sentence.

The minimum penalty for a first-time DUI, at most, is two days in jail. Anderson said that Mullan had already spent 13 days behind bars on the Seattle charge so the deal seemed reasonable. He was also ordered to pay \$2,025 in fines and restitution.

Anderson said she was aware of the Snohomish County arrest, but that because there was no conviction it could not be considered in court.

Mullan was released from Seattle jail on Jan. 9, and drove straight to Snohomish County to turn himself in because a judge there had issued a \$10,000 warrant for his arrest for missing a hearing on that county's DUI charge while he was jailed in Seattle.

Joan Cavagnaro, the chief criminal deputy at the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, said her prosecutor moved to increase bail as soon as she learned of Mullan's conviction in Seattle Municipal Court. He eventually posted a \$2,500 bond, but not before he spent several additional days in jail.

Both judges in Seattle and Snohomish County told Mullan that, if he wanted to drive, he would have to install an ignition interlock device that would prevent him from starting his pickup with alcohol on his breath.

Documents filed in connection with Monday's crash said Mullan's pickup was not equipped with such a device.

His divorce files reveal a man in a long, downward spiral of drugs, alcohol and recriminations.

He had been married for 17 tumultuous years when his wife, a first-grade teacher, filed for divorce in July 2003, when their sons were 7 and 12.

She alleged that Mullan, an electrician, had been fired for the second time from his \$61,000-a-year supervisor job "for drug usage and not showing up for work."

In a sworn declaration, the woman wrote that the employer, SME, had even "supported him while he was enrolled in drug rehab." She said that he had gone through several rehab programs in the past, but had never been able to string together more than 60 days of sobriety.

"I also think that Mark should be restricted from driving with the children in any vehicle until he can prove that he is clean and sober for an extended period of time with regards to drugs and alcohol," she wrote.

A call Tuesday to SME was not returned.

According to the records, Mullan attempted suicide on July 15, 2003, and spent a week at Harborview Medical Center. Court records say he was high on cocaine when his wife found him in his truck in their carport, a hose taped to the truck's tailpipe.

In his own declaration, Mullan said he is "an alcoholic and drug addict," and had indeed tried to kill himself.

“I do recognize that my drinking and drugging have had serious effects and would have even more serious effects if they were to continue,” Mullan said in his declaration.

In 2004, court records show the couple stopped the divorce proceedings.

In 2008, the woman filed for divorce again. It was finalized in March 2009, although Mullan continued to live with the family because of “financial hardship.” That same year, the couple put their \$600,000 Matthews Beach home up for sale.

The following month, Mullan’s ex-wife obtained a domestic-violence protection order, alleging he was verbally abusive and prone to tirades. He was ordered out of the house.

Seattle Times staff reporter Christine Clarridge and news researcher Miyoko Wolf contributed to this report.