

PENNSYLVANIA REAL-TIME NEWS

Pa. lawmaker charged in fatal hit-and-run to terror attack: Ed Marsico as DA 'best of the best'

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Dauphin County District Attorney Ed Marsico's career as a prosecutor ends Sunday. He will be sworn in as a county judge Tuesday morning. (PennLive file photo)

By Candy Woodall | cwoodall@pennlive.com

Ed Marsico's career as district attorney is ending much like it began – embroiled in a high-profile crime near the State Capitol steps.

When he drove home from work the Friday before Christmas, he expected his last 10 days as a prosecutor would probably be quiet. Calls about an active shooter in Harrisburg assured they wouldn't be.

The outgoing district attorney soon learned a man shot at a Capitol Police officer and a state trooper downtown and then engaged in a gunfight on Allison Hill.

He got to his Lower Paxton Township home and quickly left for the scene at 17th and Mulberry streets, arriving about 20 minutes after the shootout.

"It was as many cops as I remember ever seeing at a scene," said Marsico, the longest-serving district attorney in Dauphin County history.



Dauphin County District Attorney Ed Marsico arrives at the scene of a Harrisburg Police shooting, Friday evening, Dec. 22, 2017. A body could be seen laying in the street. Mark Pynes | mpynes@pennlive.com

Numerous departments responded after Ahmed El-Mofty targeted police in a shooting spree that began just before sunset at Front and State streets.

El-Mofty was shot and killed by police about an hour later on the hill.

Whenever there is an officer-involved shooting, the district attorney's office becomes the lead investigative agency. In this case, one state trooper and three Harrisburg police officers fired at El-Mofty.

"It was a big case," Marsico said. "It was big because two different officers were shot at downtown and more were shot at on the hill. That's incredibly rare for us. To have someone hunting cops...that's fortunately rare."

He worked until 3 a.m. the next morning, trying to answer two questions: Why was this guy doing it? Who was he?

The answers eluded a local and national audience, which grew larger after a U.S. Department of Homeland Security labeled the Harrisburg shootings as "a terror attack."

There were certain indicators in the case that are hallmarks in terror attacks: a recent trip to the Mideast, purchasing guns upon returning, firing shots into a crowded downtown area.

However, on Thursday, Marsico announced El-Mofty had no known connections to terrorist organizations and no accomplices. He painted the shooter as a depressed, lone gunman.



Ahmed Aminamin El-Mofty, 51, has been identified by officials as the man behind a shooting spree in Harrisburg, Dec. 22, 2017. (Photo submitted by the Dauphin County district attorney's office)

But the case isn't closed and there's more work to be done.

"We're still looking for what exactly his motivation was, we're still tracking down leads, looking for people who knew him, figuring out what he was doing overseas, getting bank records," Marsico said.

Much of that work will continue without him. Sunday is his last day as DA. He'll be sworn in as a Dauphin County judge at 11 a.m. Tuesday.

"My career as DA is now bookended by two huge cases," said Marsico, a Dauphin County Republican who has successfully prosecuted thousands of cases.

"Ed Marsico has been an outstanding district attorney and a leader among prosecutors throughout the state. His commitment to the rule of law and justice will help make him an exceptional judge." - Former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett

[A night of terror, a week of clues: What we know after Harrisburg shooting spree](#)

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