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## Local

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### Cab driver won't be prosecuted in fatal hit-and-run crash

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A former cab driver accused of a fatal hit-and-run crash that killed a homeless man will not be prosecuted, records show.

Prosecutors dropped a charge of leaving the scene of an accident involving a death against Michael Brandt, who celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday Wednesday.

Killed in the pre-dawn crash on June 5, 2013 was 62-year-old Bernard Williams, who was lying on the road and had a blood alcohol level of 0.22 when he was hit, according to a Broward Sheriff's Office report.

Brandt described the grief he endured while awaiting the pending criminal case as

"a year and a half of hell." Court records show the case was disposed and prosecutors declined to prosecute on April 15.

"I had this death hanging over my head for quite a while," Brandt said. "I feel relieved the charges were dismissed because I knew I didn't do it."

Brandt had been working as a Yellow Cab driver for about five weeks, he said, when the crash happened along the 1200 block of South Federal Highway in Dania Beach.

Williams, who had been homeless for more than 20 years, according to relatives, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Brandt was implicated when investigators saw a Yellow Cab driving away from the scene on surveillance video from a nearby

business. However, the taxi did not appear to have damage consistent with a crash and a motion-sensitive video camera on the vehicle did not become activated, Yellow Cab's president told the Sun Sentinel at the time.

Brandt was charged more than four months after the crash. "Mr. Brandt should have never been arrested," said his attorney, Robert Malove. "There were no facts to support it and it took a long time for me to show and explain to the prosecutor that an innocent man had been wrongly accused."

According to Malove, the forensic evidence was key: A paint chip found on the victim's chest during the autopsy had primer on it, which the bumper on the vehicle Brandt was driving did not have.

According to a search warrant, there was human tissue found on the undercarriage of the vehicle driven by Brandt that matched Williams' DNA.

"The amount of DNA was so minuscule that anybody who drove through that area after the accident had taken place could have easily gotten splash-off," Malove said.

This case is an example of how "an ordinary Joe" became embroiled in a case that had severe consequences despite the charges being dropped, his attorney said. Brandt had not been able to get a job while the case was underway. "He had to have valuable time in his life taken away from him," Malove said.

"Whoever did this is still out there," Brandt said.