



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

January 26, 2018

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper arrested, charged with 3 felonies

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-joy-cooper-arrested-hallandale-mayor-20180125-story.html>

STORY: Mayor Joy Cooper has been arrested and charged with three felonies: money laundering, official misconduct and exceeding the limit on campaign financing contributions.

The multiple charges stem from an undercover investigation conducted by the FBI, said Kristi Grimm, a spokeswoman for the Broward State Attorney's Office.

Each third-degree felony carries a maximum five-year prison sentence. Cooper has also been charged with soliciting contributions in a government building, a first-degree misdemeanor that carries a maximum one-year sentence.

Cooper, 57, surrendered at the Broward Main Jail this morning and is expected to post a \$12,000 bond later today, said her attorney, Larry Davis.

"We look forward to our day in court and the mayor's vindication," Davis said.

Davis said he could not comment on how long Cooper was under investigation or when she found out she was facing felony charges.

Cooper was first elected to the commission in 1999 and has been mayor since 2005. She told the Sun Sentinel last year she had no plans to run again when her term is up in November 2020, but later said she'd changed her mind.

Cooper, who has lived in Hallandale Beach since 1991, is married to Dr. Harry Cooper and has three children.

She is no stranger to controversy.

In November, her political rivals — Vice Mayor Keith London and Commissioner Michele Lazarow — sent a letter to Gov. Rick Scott asking him to remove her from office. Their letter came two days after Cooper slurred her words at a commission meeting and appeared to be under the influence of "some behavior-altering substance," the letter said.

Cooper said she was not drunk or on meds but severely dehydrated after contracting "Montezuma's revenge" during a recent trip to Mexico.

At the time, London said he felt compelled to contact the governor's office in the interest of the public good.

"We are trying to conduct official business and we have tax dollars on the line," he said. "It's public money."

More than a year ago, London, Lazarow and Anabelle Taub — who was running for commission at the time and later won election — accused Cooper and other political rivals of spying on them.

In October 2016, London found a GPS tracker on his car just two weeks before the city's election. Similar tracking devices were found on cars owned by Lazarow and Taub.

London reported it to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, prompting a yearlong investigation.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Hallandale mayor freed from jail after arrest in FBI sting

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan and Paula McMahon

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-joy-cooper-arrested-hallandale-mayor-20180125-story.html>

STORY: Longtime Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper has been freed from jail after her arrest in a public corruption case linked to disbarred Hollywood attorney Alan Koslow.

Cooper, 57, was charged with three felonies Thursday, accused of meeting with wealthy land developers who were actually undercover FBI agents pretending to seek political favor for a project in Hallandale Beach.

She is alleged to have solicited and accepted \$5,000 in political campaign contributions from them that were funneled to her through Koslow, court records show.

The agents met with Cooper and Koslow over the course of several months in 2012 as part of a public corruption sting and the meetings were all recorded on audio or video, court records say.

Cooper, who turned herself in to jail officials Thursday morning, was charged with money laundering, official misconduct and exceeding the limit on campaign finance contributions. Each carries a maximum five-year prison sentence. She also has been charged with soliciting contributions in a government building, a first-degree misdemeanor with a maximum one-year sentence.

"We look forward to our day in court and the mayor's vindication," said her attorney, Larry Davis. "We're extremely disappointed that the Broward County State Attorney's Office is relying upon Alan Koslow, a disgraced and disbarred convicted felon, as the centerpiece of its case of alleged campaign finance violations."

Cooper, wearing a black dress, walked out of the downtown Fort Lauderdale jail on Thursday evening. She briefly stopped in front of the TV news cameras, and let Davis, who was standing next to her, speak on her behalf. "We have no further comment at this point. We'll see you guys in court," Davis told the media. "Thanks very much."

Cooper didn't comment, but nodded as Davis spoke. A few steps from the jail, Davis opened a car door for Cooper. She got into the car's back seat to be driven away.

Koslow, 63, was considered one of the most effective and best-known attorneys and lobbyists in the state, specializing in representing developers and the gaming industry. He pleaded guilty in August 2016 to helping people prosecutors said he thought were "quasi-mafia" criminals hide the source of \$220,000 linked to illegal gambling and drug dealing.

The FBI's sting began in 2012 and was turned over to state prosecutors in May 2017, said Constance Simmons, a spokeswoman for the Broward State Attorney's Office.

Undercover FBI agents, posing as land developers from California "seeking political favor" for development projects, hired Koslow to represent them, court records show.

“At this time, Alan Koslow was unaware that he was interacting with undercover Federal Bureau of Investigation agents,” investigators wrote.

Cooper, mayor since 2005, and Koslow were secretly recorded during numerous meetings and conversations, court documents show. Koslow had told the undercover agents he had influence with the mayor and city commissioners and that he “had the vote of the mayor,” the records show.

During a meeting July 10, 2012 between Cooper, the undercover agents and Koslow at City Hall, Cooper was recorded saying that she and two other commissioners were a “team of three” and could ensure a favorable result for their project, according to the arrest affidavit.

“Alan Koslow showed Mayor Cooper a number representing a proposed contribution and asked her if it was a good number. She replied ‘No. Add a zero.’ Koslow confirmed ‘Three zeros, is that fine?’ and Mayor Cooper replied ‘Yes,’” according to the arrest affidavit.

Later that month, Koslow told Cooper she would receive \$10,000 in the form of two \$5,000 contributions – one before the August 2012 primary and one after, the records state.

In August 2012, Koslow and the agents went to Cooper’s home. After that meeting, the agents went to Koslow’s home and gave him a Dunkin’ Donuts bag that contained \$8,000 in cash, investigators said in court records. Koslow had told the agents he would have two Russian organizations write checks for them, investigators wrote.

During a recorded meeting at the Flashback Diner on Aug. 20, 2012, one of the undercover agents told Cooper that “the pledged payment to her, via her campaign, would be in the form of checks from a ‘bunch of Russian names,’” according to court documents.

In September, Koslow told one of the agents he had personally handed 20 checks to Cooper at a Hallandale Beach Chamber of Commerce fashion show, court records say. The checks, totaling \$5,000, were broken down into smaller amounts that appeared to come from people with Russian last names, according to the documents. Cooper said “that’s fantastic” when she got the checks, according to what Koslow told the undercover agents.

Cooper’s campaign reported nine contributions from eight teachers and a retired person in the amount of \$500 each, matching names on a list of donors Koslow had given the so-called developers, the affidavit said.

“You guys have been great,” Cooper told the undercover agents at a meeting Oct. 3, 2012, with them and Koslow at the Flashback Diner, court documents state. She said one of the checks had bounced.

According to federal court records, Koslow met at least 75 times with four different FBI agents between September 2013 and May 2016, though what he did remains secret because of continuing investigations.

Koslow gave a sworn statement to investigators Nov. 9, 2017 – after he was released from federal prison and a halfway house – acknowledging that he participated in all of the recorded events.

The FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office declined to comment Thursday and referred all questions to the Broward State Attorney's Office, which declined to provide details on the investigation.

It was unclear Thursday whether Gov. Rick Scott would remove Cooper from office, as he customarily does when an elected official has been arrested.

"These charges are unacceptable," said Lauren Schenone, a spokeswoman for Scott. "We are reviewing our next course of action."

Under the city charter, Vice Mayor Keith London would become the acting mayor and a special election would be held later this year to fill the seat.

London was out of town Thursday but submitted this statement via email: "Today is a day when Hallandale Beach residents, elected officials and staff must come together. I am committed to working with all of our city's stakeholders to move Hallandale Beach in a positive direction."

Cooper's arrest is the latest stain on a city that continually finds itself embroiled in controversy.

Former Commissioner Anthony Sanders stepped down last year after being accused of misconduct by the Broward Inspector General.

In November, Cooper's political rivals — London and Commissioner Michele Lazarow — sent a letter to Gov. Scott asking him to remove her from office. Their letter came two days after Cooper slurred her words at a commission meeting and appeared to be under the influence of "some behavior-altering substance," the letter said.

Cooper said she was not drunk or on meds but severely dehydrated after contracting diarrhea during a trip to Mexico.

More than a year ago, London, Lazarow and Anabelle Taub — who was running for commission at the time and later won election — accused Cooper and other political rivals of spying on them.

Just two weeks before the city's November 2016 election, London found a GPS tracker on his car. Similar tracking devices were found on cars owned by Lazarow and Taub.

At the time, Cooper questioned whether London, Lazarow and Taub planted the trackers on their own cars as a political stunt.

Cooper was first elected to the Hallandale commission in 1999. Last year, she said she would not run again when her term is up in November 2020. Later, after a fierce debate with London, she said she'd changed her mind.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Broward elected mayor proposal comes with an extra commissioner

BYLINE: Larry Barszewski

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/broward-politics-blog/fl-sb-broward-elected-mayor-movement-20180124-story.html>

STORY: It's still possible Broward voters will be asked in November to approve the creation of a county mayor position that is elected countywide.

However, if that happens, it looks like voters will also have to agree to increase the size of the county commission at the same time.

The county's Charter Review Commission, which has the power to put items on the ballot, narrowed down what the mayor's position would look like at its meeting Wednesday. Here are the key elements agreed to so far:

-- The mayor would be part of an 11-member commission — two more members than currently — and would have the same powers as the current appointed mayor. The new board would include the mayor and 10 commissioners from single-member districts.

-- There would not be a countywide mayoral election until 2022, to allow time for designing the 10 commission districts using 2020 Census data.

-- The mayor would make a lot more money than currently, although the position would be full-time and no outside employment would be allowed. The proposal would pay the mayor the same salary as the sheriff, the county's highest paid constitutional officer. Currently, commissioners (including the mayor) are paid \$99,997 a year, while the sheriff's salary is \$186,631. The salaries are set according to a state formula.

-- The mayor would be elected in a nonpartisan race. It would be the only nonpartisan position on the governing body, as commissioners run in partisan races.

-- The mayor would be limited to two consecutive four-year terms, one term less than the maximum for county commissioners. However, it would be possible for someone to serve 20 consecutive years on the governing body: 12 as commissioner and eight as mayor.

There's no guarantee the proposal will ever see the ballot. The Charter Review Commission voted 10-8 to have its legal counsel draft a ballot item that meets the approved criteria. It will take 13 votes to put the item on the ballot — or to even have it debated at public hearings scheduled for March.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Sheriff's deputy accused of falsifying HOA records

BYLINE: Lisa J. Huriash

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/coral-springs/fl-sb-chris-kapish-suspension-20180125-story.html>

STORY: Broward Sheriff's deputy resigned several months into a criminal investigation of whether he falsified state documents to conceal his after-hours activities, according to records released Thursday.

Former Deputy Christopher Kapish could have been suspended without pay for 20 days but he had retired with just three days' notice in May.

Kapish, a 28-year veteran of the agency, told the Sun Sentinel on Thursday that "nothing was falsified, that didn't happen" and blamed his homeowners association's management company for a clerical error.

The investigation started when a resident complained Kapish was president of the Estates at Turtle Run Homeowners Association but his wife was listed as the president in the annual reports filed with the state.

Kapish's bosses had told him in November 2014 that he wasn't allowed to be the association president or serve on the Turtle Run Foundation, which is the master association of the HOAs, because it was a conflict of interest with the agency.

Kapish argued the Sheriff's Office was violating his rights to tell him not to serve on the board: "You can't tell somebody they can't do something."

Turtle Run, a Coral Springs Community Development District that can tax itself, has more than 500 single-family homes and 2,000 apartments and condos. Kapish has been president of Turtle Run for more than a decade through election or appointment, according to the sheriff's Internal Affairs investigation.

Kapish used his wife's name in the annual corporate records filed in 2015 and 2016 with the Florida Division of Corporations.

Although his wife, Lynn Kapish, told prosecutors it was her idea for her to be president in name only, Assistant State Attorney David Schulson said he and the Sheriff's detective "strongly suspect" it was Christopher Kapish "who formulated and implanted the charade," there was insufficient evidence to be charged criminally for falsifying records, according to documents.

Kapish said he left the Sheriff's Office because "people were using my job to make complaints. They didn't want to follow the rules in the HOA."

MEDIA OUTLET: Miami Herald

HEADLINE: FBI sting nabs Hallandale mayor on campaign finance, money laundering charges

BYLINE: Martin Vassolo and Charles Rabin

LINK: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/broward/article196606329.html>

STORY: Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper was arrested Thursday on charges that she solicited, then falsely reported campaign contributions during an undercover federal sting operation that took place more than five years ago.

Though no charging documents had been released by Thursday afternoon, a single-page statement released by the Broward State Attorney's Office said Cooper was charged with "multiple campaign finance violations" stemming from an FBI undercover operation in May of 2012, including three felonies.

Among the charges: Money laundering, official misconduct, exceeding limits on campaign contributions and soliciting contributions in a government building.

Investigators say Cooper, a Democrat, "solicited campaign contributions for herself and others in amounts exceeding the legal limits, and caused those contributions to be falsely reported in campaign reports." She also solicited contributions of \$1,500 each for then-commissioners William Julian and Anthony Saunders, according to the State Attorney's Office.

Cooper turned herself in to Broward state prosecutors Thursday morning and was booked into Broward County Jail. Her bond was set at \$12,000 for the four charges, and she was released Thursday evening, her lawyer said.

It wasn't immediately clear why she was charged by the state after a federal sting. Her attorney, Larry Davis, said he was unsure why Cooper was targeted in the sting.

"We look forward to our day in court, and Mayor Cooper's vindication," Davis said in a statement.

The single-page document did, however, hint at why Cooper was targeted. In it, state prosecutors said undercover agents posing as wealthy land owners had several meetings over several months with Cooper and former attorney Alan Koslow. The meetings were documented through audio and video recording.

Video purportedly shows Hallandale Beach mayor Joy Cooper slurring her words. The South Florida Sun Sentinel reported in 2017 that Hallandale Beach mayor Joy Cooper appeared to heavily slur her words during a commission meeting and had to be driven home by her husband after the police chief confiscated her car keys. Cooper denied the allegations.

Koslow, a once powerful South Florida lobbyist and City of Hollywood attorney, pleaded guilty to federal money laundering conspiracy in 2016. Before his arrest, Koslow had been cooperating with the FBI in an expanded investigation into his relationship with local politicians and lobbyists. Koslow's former law firm was never implicated in any wrongdoing.

Davis said he was "extremely disappointed" that the Broward State Attorney's Office relied upon Koslow.

In a statement to her constituents, Cooper promised to “vigorously fight these allegations in court” and said she has “always been committed to the betterment of our community.”

State prosecutors refused comment Thursday afternoon.

Cooper, who last year faced calls to resign, took office in 2005, and was elected to the commission in 1999.

The South Florida Sun Sentinel reported in November that Cooper appeared to heavily slur her words during a commission meeting and had to be driven home by her husband after the police chief confiscated her car keys.

Her political rivals — Vice Mayor Keith London and Commissioner Michele Lazarow — accused Cooper of being under the influence and sent a letter to Gov. Rick Scott asking him to remove her from office, which he never did. Cooper said she was not intoxicated but sick after contracting “Montezuma’s revenge” on a trip to Mexico.

“I am very fit to serve as mayor,” she said at the time, according to the Sun Sentinel. “I have always been fit to serve as mayor and I will always remain fit.”

Commissioner Anabelle Taub, a first-term commissioner and one of Cooper’s only allies on the dais, said she learned of Cooper’s arrest around noon Thursday, and that she was “shocked and sad and very afraid for the state of our city.”

“It’s a really sad day for Hallandale,” Taub said, adding that taxpayers stand to lose the most in this situation.

The commission is plagued by political infighting and seemingly constant controversy. Missing one member since August, when then-commissioner Anthony Saunders resigned in light of accusations of misconduct by the Inspector General. The IG accused him of using his office to award nearly \$1 million to a nonprofit that made regular payments to his church and family.

London, who put out a statement saying he was acting mayor, called for unity in the wake of his political rival’s arrest.

“Today is a day when Hallandale Beach residents, elected officials and staff must come together,” he said in a statement. “I am committed to working with all of our city’s stakeholders to move...in a positive direction.”

The City of Hallandale Beach said it will “fully cooperate with any investigation and will extend full cooperation with any law enforcement agencies.”

MEDIA OUTLET: FOX Miami (Channel 7)

HEADLINE: Hallandale Beach mayor released on bond, faces 3 felony charges

BYLINE: Franklin White

LINK: <https://wsvn.com/news/local/hallandale-beach-mayor-released-on-bond-faces-3-felony-charges/>

STORY: HALLANDALE BEACH, FLA. (WSVN) - Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper surrendered to authorities on multiple charges, including money laundering, Thursday morning, and was later released from jail after paying her bond.

According to the Broward State Attorney's Office, Cooper turned herself in just before 10:30 a.m. Prosecutors said she has been charged with money laundering, official misconduct, and exceeding limits on contributions for campaign financing — all of which are third-degree felonies. Cooper also faces a first-degree misdemeanor charge of soliciting contributions to a campaign in a government building.

Each felony charge is punishable by a prison sentence not exceeding five years, while the misdemeanor charge carries up to one year in prison.

Cooper released a statement that read in part, "This note is to inform you that the Broward County State Attorney's Office has decided to charge me with allegations of campaign finance violations. I can assure you that I will vigorously fight these allegations in court."

Meanwhile, city officials released a statement that read in part, "The City will fully cooperate with any investigation and will extend full cooperation with any law enforcement agencies. Residents should know that we will continue city business as usual and operate under the processes defined by the city charter."

Cooper's bond was set at \$12,000. She paid her bond and was released from the Broward County Jail, Thursday night, after spending seven hours there.

"We have no further comment at this point, and we'll see you guys in court," said Cooper's attorney, Larry Davis, as they walked out of the jail.

Davis said he is certain his client will be found innocent of any wrongdoing. When asked if Cooper maintains her innocence, Davis replied, "Absolutely, and we look forward to our day in court and complete vindication of Mayor Cooper."

Hallandale Beach Commissioner Michele Lazarow said she was surprised by the arrest. "I don't want to give the impression that anybody in City Hall is happy about this," she said. "We're not happy. We believe that it brings a black cloud or a black eye to Hallandale Beach."

The State Attorney's Office said Cooper's arrest follows an FBI undercover sting operation that began back in 2012. FBI agents posing as land developers met with Cooper. Investigators said she promised them favors in exchange for money and votes.

Officials said Cooper's case is being handled by members of the Special Prosecutions and Public Corruption Unit.

Cooper spoke to 7News in June of 2017. When asked if she knew anything about a public corruption investigation, she replied, "Not until you had mentioned it to me, no."

Thursday afternoon, London released a statement that read, "Today is a day when Hallandale Beach residents, elected officials and staff must come together. I am committed to working with all of our city's stakeholders to move Hallandale Beach in a positive direction."

There have been numerous other scandals involving Hallandale Beach city officials, as well.

"This is not what we continue to want to have happen for Hallandale Beach," said Lazarow. "This is disappointing once again."

Former Hallandale Beach Commissioner Bill Julian was accused of accepting a van for a food bank in exchange for a favorable vote. He was later cleared of the accusations.

In a voicemail, Julian's voice can reportedly be heard saying, "What I did was I voted against an extra \$25,000. We are already gonna get \$25,000. I didn't want to [inaudible] for more because what they don't know is they're buying the food bank a new van, but I couldn't tell everybody."

Cooper and other commissioners had also been known to argue at meetings.

Some commissioners, including Vice Mayor Keith London, also claimed that someone had put tracking devices on their personal cars.

London also had a confrontation with a worker at a job site, during which he was caught on video saying, "How many times did you go to prison? What was it? Did you like it? Did you suck...?"

Next, Cooper will have an arraignment, and if she is suspended by Florida Gov. Rick Scott, London would become acting mayor.

MEDIA OUTLET: ABC Miami (Channel 10)

HEADLINE: Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper walks out of jail

BYLINE: Peter Burke

LINK: <https://www.local10.com/news/politics/hallandale-beach-mayor-joy-cooper-released-from-jail>

STORY: FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. - Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper walked out of jail Thursday night after she was arrested on three felony charges.

The city's first elected mayor held her husband's hand as she walked out of jail without answering any questions from reporters.

Cooper surrendered hours earlier on charges of money laundering, official misconduct and exceeding limits on campaign contributions, all of which are third-degree felonies. She is also charged with soliciting contributions in a government building, which is a first-degree misdemeanor.

"We're all very surprised at City Hall," Hallandale Beach Commissioner Michele Lazarow said. "It's a sad day for the city."

According to the Broward County state attorney's office, FBI agents posing as wealthy land developers met with Cooper, former attorney Alan Koslow and other undercover agents posing as business owners over the course of several months to discuss a business project in the city.

Investigators said Cooper solicited campaign contributions for herself and others that exceeded the legal limit and falsely reported the contributions in campaign reports. Investigators said Cooper also solicited contributions in the amount of \$1,500 each for then-Commissioners Bill Julian and Anthony Sanders.

Authorities said all of the meetings were secretly recorded.

Cooper's attorney, Larry Davis, said he is "extremely disappointed in the state attorney's office relying on a convicted, disbarred and disgraced former attorney, Alan Koslow, to be the center of their case."

Koslow was sentenced to a year and a day in federal prison for money laundering. He refused to say whether he was cooperating with the federal government when he spoke to Local 10 News investigative reporter Bob Norman in June 2016.

In November, Cooper slurred her words and rambled on the dais during a commission meeting. When commissioners asked her to leave, she refused. Her husband arrived to take her home and was recorded challenging Vice Mayor Keith London to a fight in the parking lot.

Although Cooper had no comment as she left jail, she released a statement saying that she was going to "vigorously fight these allegations in court."

MEDIA OUTLET: ABC Miami (Channel 10)

HEADLINE: Pembroke Pines police officer thankful for community's support after being dragged by car

BYLINE: Erica Rakow and Amanda Batchelor

LINK: <https://www.local10.com/news/crime/pembroke-pines-police-officer-thankful-for-community-support-after-being-dragged-by-car>

STORY: PEMBROKE PINES, Fla. - Pembroke Pines police Officer Jon Cusack got into the line of work 19 years ago to help others. He said he was trying to help two people who were passed out inside a car last month at Century Village, but he never imagined what would happen next.

Body camera footage shows Cusack being dragged for more than a half-mile by a man who police said admitted to being on drugs.

Cusack said he first tried to stop the driver from getting on the road and hurting anyone else. Then he had to hang on to save his own life.

"I can tell you that I was afraid. You know, I was scared," he said. "I can't say that -- not to sound macho or anything -- I can't say that too many times in my career that I've really felt that, and this was definitely one of those times."

Cusack is back at work, but is working light duty as he continues to recover.

He said he is thankful for the support he's received from the community and his law enforcement family, whom he credits for helping him through the tough time.

"Serving the community and helping people is honestly something that I really enjoy, and this incident isn't going to change what I do and how I do it," Cusack said. "It's only going to, I think, make me stronger."

Authorities said Cusack suffered severe road rash in the incident that happened the morning of Dec. 19 after Cusack responded to a possible overdose in a car at Century Village.

Police said a security guard in the neighborhood called authorities after spotting a man and a woman who were unconscious in the car. A clear baggie containing an unknown substance could also be seen inside the car, authorities said.

Police said the driver, Thomas Cabrera, 38, placed the car into drive when Cusack woke him up and tried to leave the scene.

Cusack reached into the car to try to prevent Cabrera from leaving, and was dragged for more than a half-mile as Cabrera drove at speeds up to 60 mph, authorities said.

Police said Cusack clung to the car to avoid being run over.

When a Pembroke Pines Fire Rescue crew responded to the initial overdose call, Cabrera changed his direction of travel and tried to crash into their truck to cause Cusack to fall from his vehicle, police said.

Authorities said Cusack eventually released his hold once the driver slowed his speed as he approached the Century Village exit.

"My left shoe was gone. It was somewhere on the road. I have no idea. And my right shoe was pretty much from where the laces start to the toe was ripped off," Cusack said.

Police said the car got onto northbound Interstate 75 before continuing east on Interstate 595.

It eventually slowed down because of oncoming traffic, allowing officers to corner the suspects on the shoulder.

Cabrera, who authorities said confessed to using cocaine and heroin, is behind held in jail without bail.

"I look back on it and I wonder how things could've gone worse and didn't," Cusack said. "And there's really no explanation for it. I'm here."

Cusack underwent a minor surgery on his foot and was able to spend the holidays at home with his family.