

Former Brevard deputies misconduct record could affect DeRossett trial

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Fallout from the documented misconduct of a Brevard County Sheriff's deputy could assist a man accused of trying to murder three deputies.

A long history of violations by deputy Jason Roberts became an issue in the upcoming John DeRossett attempted murder trial.

Roberts was a key figure in a chaotic 2015 shootout.

Roberts' partner, Casey Smith, was shot and almost killed; John DeRossett was also shot and was later charged with trying to murder three deputies.

Defense attorney Mike Panella said Roberts has a pattern of unprofessional behavior.

Panella thinks the pattern could help free his client.

The latest event for Roberts was in Jacksonville in February.

A sheriff's investigative report said a drunken Roberts attacked another hotel guest, knocked out a tooth and threatened to kill him.

The other man shot Roberts three times in self-defense.

Documents show Roberts had just been disciplined by the Brevard County Sheriff's Office three times within the previous few months: in December for substandard performance; in October for intoxication on and off duty; and in September, for violation of the car chase policy.

Documents show a total of nine policy violations since 2012. Sheriff Wayne Ivey fired him this week and wrote, "A review of your performance record demonstrates a clear, documented pattern of substandard behavior, insubordination, repeated failure to adhere to procedures --."

DeRossett's defense attorney said in court Wednesday the same thing happened in the DeRossett shootout, triggered by a prostitution raid planned by Roberts.

"They violated protocol by going to their house without a warrant at 9:30 at night," Panella said. "So, yes, absolutely it was unprofessional."

Panella signaled in court he will try to use Roberts's record to free DeRossett.

DeRossett's trial is in July.