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Mercer County Homicide Task Force Investigation Leads to Arrest of Ewing Man

Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri reported today that an investigation by the Mercer County Homicide Task Force and the Trenton Police has led to the arrest of a Ewing man for aggravated manslaughter.

Justin Wilkes, 21, was arrested and charged Tuesday evening with first-degree aggravated manslaughter and third-degree endangering an injured victim. The prosecutor's office has filed a motion to detain Wilkes pending trial.

On Saturday, May 29, 2021, at approximately 11:10 p.m., Trenton police officers were detailed to the area of South Clinton and Roebing avenues on a report of a pedestrian struck. While enroute, Trenton police dispatch advised that callers had heard two gunshots. Upon arrival, officers located the victim, an unidentified Hispanic male, laying in the street. He was bleeding from the head and had visible tire marks across his torso. Trenton Emergency Services arrived on scene and attempted to provide aid, however, the victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

Based on information received, the HTF was notified and responded. An initial canvas of the scene did not produce evidence of a shooting. Detectives received witness information that the victim was seen walking in the roadway then observed falling to the ground as a white Honda Civic hit him and drove off in the direction of Beatty Street. Detectives were able to locate the vehicle and identify the driver as Elber Yuman, 24, of

Princeton Junction. On Sunday, May 30, 2021, Yuman was charged with knowingly leaving the scene of an accident that resulted in death.

A preliminary examination of the victim's body by the medical examiner's office suggested the victim had been run over and had significant injuries to the left side of his face, but there was no indication he had been shot.

Area video surveillance was reviewed and witnesses were interviewed as part of the ongoing investigation. Detectives established that an individual identified as Justin Wilkes runs up to the victim at approximately 11 p.m. and punches him in the head. Wilkes continued to assault the victim as he tried to get away, stomping and kicking him after he fell to the ground in the middle of South Clinton Avenue. Wilkes fled the area by vehicle as the victim was still lying in the road, beaten unconscious. Shortly thereafter, the white Honda Civic driven by Yuman crossed over Roebling Avenue while traveling on South Clinton Avenue, running over the victim. Yuman continued driving toward Beatty Street without stopping.

The victim remains unidentified. Anyone with information is asked to call HTF Detective Marc Masseroni at (609) 989-6406. Information can also be emailed to mchtftips@mercercounty.org.

Despite having been charged, every defendant is presumed innocent until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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