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Mercer County Grand Jury Returns Indictment in the 2020 Murder of Dontae Barnes

A Mercer County grand jury recently returned a four-count indictment charging Dwayne Capers with the June 2020 shooting death of 37-year-old Dontae Barnes in Trenton, Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri reported.

Capers, 28, of Trenton, is charged with first-degree murder, second-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, second-degree unlawful possession of a handgun and second-degree certain persons not to possess a firearm. He is being held in the Mercer County Correction Center pending trial.

The indictment is the result of an investigation by the Mercer County Homicide Task Force and the Trenton Police Department. At approximately 5:20 p.m. on June 2, 2020, police responded to a Shot Spotter activation in the area of Oakland Street and Hoffman Avenue. Upon arrival, police located Barnes on the sidewalk suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

An initial canvas of the scene produced several shell casings and some clothing articles. Area video surveillance was reviewed and footage was obtained capturing the entire incident. An investigative detention order was obtained requiring Capers to provide a DNA sample. Results of a DNA analysis indicated Capers' DNA profile was found on a tank top shirt recovered after Barnes' shooting. Capers was arrested on December 23, 2021.

Assistant Prosecutor Rachel Cook presented the case to the grand jury.

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

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