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Mercer County Homicide Task Force Investigation Leads to Charges in Easter Sunday Homicide in Trenton

Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri announced today that the Mercer County Homicide Task Force has arrested and charged three men for the April 9, 2023 shooting homicide on Federal Street in Trenton.

Joseph Fayson, 22, and Justin Malkin, 23, both of Trenton, and Darrin Eutsey, 23, of Hamilton, were taken into custody early this morning. All three have been charged with first-degree murder, second-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, and third-degree theft by receiving stolen property. Fayson and Malkin are also charged with second-degree certain persons not to possess a firearm. The prosecutor's office intends to file motions to detain all three defendants.

The charges are the result of an investigation by the Mercer County Homicide Task Force. Prosecutor Onofri praised the investigative work of the HTF and thanked the public for the assistance provided during the investigation. "I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for the community to work with us," Prosecutor Onofri said. "I encourage the public to maintain communication with law enforcement," he added.

At approximately 6:56 p.m. on Sunday, April 9, 2023, Trenton police responded to a ShotSpotter notification reporting multiple shots fired in the area of Lambertson and Federal streets. Upon arrival, officers located a male gunshot victim in the driver's seat of his parked gray 2010 Infiniti G37. The vehicle and the victim, later identified as Jhosse Tolentino, 23, of Trenton, were each struck multiple times. Police later collected 34 shell casings from the side of 601 Lambertson Street near the victim's vehicle. Tolentino was transported to Capital Health Regional Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

In the course of the investigation, Detectives reviewed surveillance footage from nearby businesses and Trenton City cameras from the time of the shooting. Surveillance video captured a black 2007 Toyota 4Runner, later identified as a stolen vehicle, cross over Lambertson Street and drive up to the victim's vehicle. Fayson, Malkin, and Eutsey could be seen exiting the 4Runner and approaching the victim's vehicle with firearms. They shot at the driver's seat area of the victim's vehicle, then returned to and fled in the 4Runner. The stolen Toyota 4Runner was later found by Detectives parked in the rear of a vacant property on Edgewood Avenue. Video surveillance from that area showed that the 4Runner drove directly from the shooting to Edgewood Avenue where the vehicle was abandoned.

For more than four years, there has been an ongoing feud between H-block gang members and individuals associated with the South Trenton area, specifically individuals associated with Lambertson Street, of which the victim was a part. The ongoing feud has included murders, shootings and disputes on social media. Detectives learned that, leading up to the murder, there was a dispute on social media between the victim and family members of H-block gang members. This led to H-block member Joseph Fayson insulting the victim and Lambertson Street associates on Instagram. The victim then shared a story on Instagram in response to one of the comments by Fayson shortly before he was murdered.

Prosecutor Onofri thanked the Mercer County Homicide Task Force, his Special Investigations Unit, the Trenton Police Department, the U.S. Marshals NY/NJ Regional Fugitive Task Force, the Mercer County Tactical Response Team, under the leadership of Mercer County Sheriff Jack Kemler, and the Hamilton SWAT for their assistance.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to call HTF Detective Karl Johnston or HTF Detective Nicholas Barber at (609) 989-6406. Information can also be emailed to mchftips@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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