



## OFFICE OF THE MERCER COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Trenton Woman Arrested for Fatal Stabbing in June**

Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri announced today that the Mercer County Homicide Task Force has arrested and charged a Trenton woman for the June 19, 2023, stabbing homicide on Edgewood Avenue in Trenton.

Shawnette Johnson, 42, of Trenton, was taken into custody this morning by the U.S. Marshals NY/NJ Regional Fugitive Task Force. She has been charged with first-degree murder, third-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, fourth-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, and fourth-degree tampering with evidence. The prosecutor's office has filed a motion to detain Johnson.

On Monday, June 19, 2023, at approximately 10:45 p.m., the Trenton Emergency Medical Services (TEMs) received a 911 call for a male stabbed at 1100 Edgewood Avenue, Trenton, New Jersey. The 911 caller reported that his neighbor was stabbed and requested paramedics to the location. TEMs arrived and transported the victim, later identified as Ernest Denard, 61, to Capital Health Regional Medical Center. The victim was pronounced deceased at the hospital at approximately 2:18 a.m.

Investigation revealed that the victim knocked on his neighbor's door at approximately 10:45 p.m. and asked him to call an ambulance because he had been stabbed. HTF detectives reviewed video surveillance from the victim's apartment complex which showed that, approximately 12

minutes earlier, the victim knocked on the door of apartment A3 and was let in by a black female. He exited after approximately 10 minutes with visible blood on his shirt. Detectives observed on the video that the victim lifted his shirt and appeared to be looking at his abdomen. He then walked back towards his apartment in building B where he requested his neighbor call for ambulance.

Additional video showed the resident of apartment A3, Shawnette Johnson, exit her apartment one minute after the victim left and walk towards the rear exit of the building. She opened the rear door, stepped outside and appeared to throw an object, which was similar in size and shape to a knife, before she walked back into the apartment building. Detectives later searched the area where Johnson was seen throwing the object and recovered a steak knife with a black handle. A subsequent search of Johnson's apartment revealed additional knives of the same type and manufacturer as the knife recovered outside, as well as suspected blood on the floor, on the inside front door doorknob, and on blue slide-on sandals that Shawnette Johnson was observed wearing when she exited the apartment.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to call HTF Detective Jennifer Eyster at (609) 989-6406. Information can also be emailed to [mchtftips@mercercounty.org](mailto: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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