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Trenton Man Indicted for Murder at James Dry Cleaning

TRENTON – A Mercer County grand jury returned a seven-count indictment last week charging a 19-year-old Trenton man with the shooting death of 33-year-old Ambreesh Patel, Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. announced.

Thomas Hawkins, of Highland Avenue, was indicted on one count of first-degree aggravated murder, one count of first-degree murder, one count of first-degree felony murder, one count of first-degree robbery, one count of second-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, one count of third-degree unlawful possession of a weapon and one count of third-degree hindering apprehension or prosecution.

On September 17, 2010, at 11:45 a.m., Hawkins entered James Dry Cleaners & Laundromat on Parkside Avenue with a handgun and demanded money from Patel. When Patel replied that he didn't have any money, Hawkins shot him and fled the scene.

Hawkins would be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility for parole if found guilty of the aggravated murder charge. This case is the second time the charge has been used in Mercer County. Hawkins remains in the Mercer County Correction Center in lieu of \$1 million bail.

Assistant Prosecutor Lew Korngut, chief of the Homicide Unit 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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