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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 23, 2014

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Trenton Man Indicted for Murder

TRENTON – A Mercer County grand jury returned a four-count indictment last week charging a Trenton man with the shooting death of 45-year-old Joseph Gaines.

Markquice Thomas, 28, of Stuyvesant Avenue, was indicted on one count of murder, one count of second-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and one count of second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon.

On March 9, 2014, at approximately 3:45 p.m., Thomas stood on Martin Luther King Boulevard, near the intersection of Rossell Avenue, and fired a handgun several times at Joseph Gaines, who was seated in a parked SUV. One of the shots struck Gaines in the head. He was transported to Capital Health Regional Medical Center, where he succumbed to his injuries on April 3.

An investigation by the Mercer County Homicide Task Force, led by Prosecutor's Detective Bryan Cottrell, Lawrence Police Detective Jim Smith and Trenton Police Detective Sergeant Chris Doyle, developed information on a tan Mercury Montego connected to the shooting. During the afternoon of March 11, off-duty Trenton Police Officer Nathan Bolognini spotted the vehicle and reported it. Trenton Patrol Officers Victor Miranda and Howard Watkins responded to Parker and North Olden avenues and located the Mercury. As they approached Thomas, who was outside of the vehicle, he dropped heroin to the ground. Thomas was taken into custody and transported to the prosecutor's office.

Thomas was also indicted on one count of third-degree aggravated assault for causing bodily injury to a second victim during the March 9 shooting. During the course of the investigation, detectives located an adult male who had been treated and released from the hospital for a gunshot wound to the hand.

Thomas remains in the Mercer County Correction Center in lieu of \$500,000 cash only bail.

Assistant Prosecutor Lew Korngut, chief of the Homicide Task Force, 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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