



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**MERCER COUNTY
COURT HOUSE
P.O. BOX 8068**

JOSEPH L. BOCCHINI, JR.
Prosecutor

**TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068
PHONE: (609) 989-6350
(609) 989-6305
FAX #: (609) 989-0161**

ANGELO J. ONOFRI
First Assistant Prosecutor

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CONTACT: Casey A. DeBlasio
(609) 989-6379

Trenton Man Charged with the Attempted Murder of Joseph Gaines

Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. and Trenton Police Director Ralph Rivera Jr. announced today the arrest of 28-year-old Markquice R. Thomas AKA Tank for the March 9 attempted murder of Joseph Gaines.

Thomas (DOB 2/24/86), of Stuyvesant Avenue, was charged Tuesday evening with attempted murder, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a weapon and certain persons not to possess a firearm. Bail on the attempted murder was set at \$250,000 by Mercer County Superior Court Judge Janetta D. Marbrey.

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 Sunday afternoon shooting on Martin Luther King Boulevard. Tuesday afternoon, 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.

The investigation revealed that 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 remains in Capital Health Regional Medical Center in critical condition.

Thomas was additionally charged by the Trenton police with possession of a controlled dangerous substance and possession with the intent to distribute.

The task force has been operating since November 2013. Under the command of Mercer County Prosecutor's Captain Robert Dispoto and Lieutenant Rich Frascella, the task force is comprised of officers with the prosecutor's office, the Mercer County Sheriff's Office, the New Jersey State Police, and the Lawrence, Trenton and West Windsor police departments. Assistant Prosecutor Lew Korngut is prosecuting the case.

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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