



BCPO News

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Charges Upgraded to Homicide in Delaware River Fatal Crash

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina and City of Burlington Police Chief Alan Snow announced today that a man whose passenger died after the car he was driving went into the Delaware River last month has been charged with causing her death.

Charges against Jacob T. Garrett, 24, of the 100 block of Stacy Court in Burlington City, were upgraded to include Vehicular Homicide (First Degree).

Garrett had previously been charged with Leaving the Scene of a Fatal Accident (Second Degree), Causing Death while Driving with a Suspended License (Third Degree) and Endangering an Injured Victim (Third Degree). A Superior Court judge ruled that Garrett should be detained following the January 14 crash.

The charges were upgraded yesterday after the Prosecutor's Office received the results of toxicology tests conducted on blood drawn from Garrett after he was taken into custody shortly following the crash.

The investigation revealed that Garrett was traveling at a high rate of speed along Riverbank Road in Burlington City when his vehicle struck a parked minivan before crashing through a fence and into the water near Wood Street just before 1 p.m.

Witnesses to the crash who rushed over to the scene indicated Garrett was already out of the vehicle by the time they arrived. "Help my girlfriend," witnesses reported Garrett as saying to them before he fled.

The front end of the car broke through the ice. Stephanie White, 23, of Burlington City, was found submerged in water inside of the vehicle with her seat belt still fastened. She was extricated by emergency workers and transported to Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County in Willingboro, where she was pronounced dead.

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City of Burlington police used K-9 Officer Kobi, a German Shepherd, to track Garrett from the river to the Burlington Towne Center North light rail platform on West Broad Street. Police then had the train stopped at the Beverly/Edgewater Park station, where Garrett was located by officers from the Beverly City, Edgewater Park and City of Burlington police departments.

The investigation was conducted by the Prosecutor's Office and City of Burlington Police Department. The lead investigators are BCPO Detective Tony Luyber and City of Burlington Police Detective Corporal Anna Czajka.

Assistant Prosecutor Thaddeus E. Drummond, supervisor of the BCPO Collision and Analysis Reconstruction Unit, is prosecuting the case, which will now be prepared for presentation to a Burlington County Grand Jury to be considered for indictment.

Rescue agencies responding to the scene included the Burlington City Fire Department, Burlington Township Fire Department, Endeavor Emergency Squad and Croydon (Pa.) Fire Company.

All persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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