



BCPO News

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Second Arrest Made in January Edgewater Park Double Fatal Shooting

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina and Edgewater Park Township Police Chief Robert D. Hess announced that a 34-year-old Willingboro man has become the second person to be charged in the fatal shooting of two people at a party in Edgewater Park earlier this year.

David Armstrong, of Beaverdale Lane, faces two counts of Murder (First Degree) Conspiracy to Commit Murder (First Degree), Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose (Second Degree), and Unlawful Possession of a Weapon (Second Degree). He turned himself in this morning at the Willingboro Township police station.

His co-defendant, Ronny Paden, 27, of Delran, was arrested May 7 and faces the same charges, along with Certain Persons not to Have Firearms (Second Degree). Armstrong was lodged in the Burlington County Jail in Mount Holly pending a detention hearing in Superior Court. Paden is being detained in the Ocean County Jail.

The investigation began after police were called to the home in the 200 block of Dogwood Road just before 1 a.m. on January 24 and discovered the bodies of James Gist III, 29, of Westampton and Marcus Thompson, 29, of Willingboro.

Several people had gathered at the house to celebrate a birthday. Gist was shot while inside the driver's seat of a parked vehicle, while Thompson was struck inside the residence. Both men were pronounced dead at the scene. No other attendees were hit by gunfire. The investigation revealed that neither victim was the intended target.

The homicide investigation was conducted by detectives from the BCPO and the Edgewater Park Township Police Department, with assistance from the Delran Township Police Department, New Jersey State Police, and the Willingboro Township Police Department. Paden was apprehended by the U.S. Marshals Service – New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force, which includes the Burlington County Sheriff's Department.

The lead investigators are BCPO Detective Erica Ridge and EPTPD Detective Charles Ryder. Armstrong and Paden will be prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Bob Van Gilst, supervisor of the BCPO Major Crimes Unit – Violent Crimes Section.

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

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