



BCPO News



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Murder Charges Filed in 2017 Maple Shade Slaying of Mom, Son

Burlington County Prosecutor LaChia L. Bradshaw and Maple Shade Police Chief Christopher J. Fletcher announced today that a 38-year-old Indian National has been charged with the March 2017 homicides of a woman and her young son inside an apartment in Maple Shade, New Jersey.

Nazeer Hameed was charged with the slayings and indicted earlier this year on two counts of Murder (First Degree), two counts of Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose (Third Degree) and Unlawful Possession of a Weapon (Fourth Degree).

"Our message today is clear - we do not forget, we do not forgive, and we do not stop pursuing those who take innocent lives," Prosecutor Bradshaw said. "Justice is sometimes delayed based on the challenges of each case, but justice must always prevail, and it certainly will in this case."

The investigation into these horrific homicides began on the evening of March 23, 2017, when officers from the Maple Shade Police Department were called to an apartment complex after the bodies of Sasikala Narra, 38, and Anish Narra, 6, were discovered inside their Hamilton Road unit.

An autopsy performed by Burlington County Medical Examiner Dr. Ian Hood determined they each died from multiple slash wounds to their necks. Anish Narra was nearly decapitated by his attacker. The post-mortem examination revealed several defensive wounds on the bodies of both victims.

"The scene that day was unimaginable," Chief Fletcher said. "Those who responded saw the carnage of a mother and her young child who spent their final moments fighting for their lives."

Hameed lived in the same apartment complex as the Narras. Hameed and Narra both worked for the same company, Cognizant Technology Solutions, which was hired to perform consulting work for a Philadelphia-based business.

Hameed returned to India six months after the killings, where he remains to this day. As the investigation proceeded, he was identified as a person of interest after it was revealed he was stalking the husband and father of the victims, Hanumanth Narra.

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The announcement of the charges against Hameed was delayed while investigators attempted to gain additional evidence and worked with our federal law enforcement partners to seek extradition.

While analyzing the physical evidence collected from the crime scene, it was determined that a tiny droplet of blood collected by investigators did not come from either victim. It was later determined that the blood was the same type as Hameed and belonged to a male with Central Asian ancestry.

Multiple unsuccessful attempts were made to collaborate with officials in India to collect a DNA sample from Hameed. In October 2020, the Central Bureau of Investigation in India advised the Federal Bureau of Investigation that Nazeer Hameed refused to provide a DNA sample.

In March 2023, a Mutual Legal Assistance request was made to the government of India asking that Hameed's DNA be collected via a court order. The United States Department of Justice received acknowledgment from the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs that they had received the request, but it was never fulfilled.

Even as the public was misinformed by an inflammatory podcast that the case had become stagnant, and detectives were maligned as unsympathetic to the victims because of their Indian origin, additional resources from multiple agencies were being applied to advance the investigation.

"Let me be very clear, our commitment to bringing justice for Sasikala and Anish never wavered," Chief Fletcher said. "These crimes were an outrage to our community, and to all the investigators who worked on this case. Two photos hang prominently inside our detective bureau, one of Sasikala and Anish together, and another of Anish at school in his uniform. Those images reminded every investigator, every day, that they carried the responsibility of bringing justice for the victims."

Detectives working on this case were undeterred by initial setbacks and utilized multiple approaches to move the investigation forward. Ultimately, it was through a request from the Prosecutor's Office to his employer that a DNA sample was finally obtained connecting Hameed to the slayings.

After being served with a subpoena, Cognizant cooperated and provided investigators with the company-issued laptop utilized by Nazeer Hameed. After arriving in the United States at a Cognizant office, the laptop was obtained by law enforcement officials and chain of custody procedures for collecting evidence were employed as it was transported to the New Jersey State Police DNA Laboratory in Hamilton, Mercer County.

A search warrant seeking authorization for forensic processing of the laptop was granted by a Superior Court judge in Burlington County. An examination of the laptop's keyboard generated a DNA profile that was determined to be consistent with the DNA from the unknown blood droplet at the murder scene.

"This development provided strong physical evidence that confirmed what our investigation had already determined," BCPO Lt. Brian Cunningham said. "Nazeer Hameed went to the Narra apartment and brutally murdered Sasikala and her son, Anish."

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The motive for the killings has not been definitively established. In New Jersey, prosecutors are not required to prove a motive to convict a defendant of a crime.

The next step will be to bring Hameed back to the United States to face prosecution.

"He committed this crime, there is no doubt in our minds that he is responsible," BCPO Chief of Investigations Patrick J. Thornton said. "We are hopeful that he will be extradited. I can't imagine the powers that be in India want to protect a man who nearly decapitated a 6-year-old child after killing his mother in front of him"

The authority for seeking the extradition of a criminal defendant from another country is shared by the United States Department of Justice and the United States Department of State.

"We call upon the United States government and the government of India to take swift and decisive action to ensure this individual is extradited without delay to face the charges that await him here," Prosecutor Bradshaw said. "No border, no distance, and no delay should stand in the way of justice. We urge full cooperation between our nations to demonstrate that those who commit violent crimes cannot flee accountability by crossing oceans."

An extradition treaty between the United States and India has been in effect since 1999. The bilateral agreement provides the legal framework for the two countries to cooperate in the surrender of individuals accused or convicted of crimes that meet specific criteria.

The Prosecutor's Office is grateful to the Indian Cultural Center of Southern New Jersey for its ongoing support and assistance during this investigation.

"On behalf of ICC and the Indian community in the South Jersey area, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office, the Maple Shade Police Department, and all the law enforcement agencies involved in this," said ICC Board of Trustees member Jayesh Parikh. "We are deeply grateful to everyone involved for their dedication and perseverance over the past eight years, despite the many challenges and setbacks encountered along the way."

The investigation was conducted by the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office, the Maple Shade Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New Jersey State Police.

"The charges being announced today are the result of eight years of tireless partnership in the quest for justice," FBI Newark Special Agent in Charge Stefanie Roddy said. "FBI Newark has been in lockstep with the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office and the Maple Shade Police Department since receiving news of these horrific murders. Partnership is the cornerstone of upholding justice in New Jersey."

The lead investigators were BCPO Lt. Brian Cunningham, MSPD Detective Sgt. A. Scot Wallace and FBI Special Agent Anthony DiPietro. Upon extradition of the defendant, the case will be prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Robert Van Gilst, supervisor of the BCPO Major Crimes Unit.

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

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