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CHARGES FOR MOM, BOYFRIEND UPGRADED TO FIRST-DEGREE MURDER IN DEATH OF 4-YEAR-OLD TAHJIR SMITH ON JAN. 22



NORRISTOWN, Pa. (April 6, 2018) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Abington Township Police Chief Patrick Molloy announce the upgrading of charges faced by Lisa Smith, 19, and Keiff King, 26, both of Willow Grove in Abington Township, to First-Degree Murder for the death of 4-year-old Tahjir Smith on Jan. 22.

The First-Degree Murder charge was filed on April 4, 2018, after Forensic Pathologist Dr. Ian Hood completed his autopsy of the child. On March 30, 2018, Dr. Hood opined that Tahjir Smith died from multiple blunt injuries, thermal injuries and shock. The manner of death was listed as homicide. The initial autopsy on Jan. 23, 2018, by Dr. Hood indicated that he was awaiting further test results before making a determination as to manner of death.

“The forensic pathologist’s determination that Tahjir’s death was homicide shows what detectives found in our investigation—that this was a violent, sustained beating of a 4-year-old that caused his death,” said Steele. “And it was a beating at the hands of the mother’s boyfriend and the mother, the very person entrusted to care for the boy. The news of this boy’s death has saddened and outraged many people. Two of our best prosecutors—First Assistant District Attorney McCann and ADA Heron—will prosecute the case and will strive to get justice for the senseless killing of young Tahjir.”

The investigation of Tahjir Smith’s death began at approximately 6:11 p.m., when Abington Township Police responded to a report of a respiratory emergency. Paramedics arrived to find the boy limp and unresponsive. He was transported to Abington Jefferson Health Hospital where he was pronounced dead. Montgomery County Detectives and Abington Police began a joint investigation that revealed that earlier in the day Tahjir had been beaten by both defendants at their home in the 1800 block of Lukens Avenue after he had spilled his breakfast cereal. He was repeatedly struck about the head and torso.

The defendants were arraigned on the new charges by Magisterial District Judge John D. Kessler via video from the Montgomery County Correctional Facility, where the defendants have been since their initial arrest on Jan. 23, 2018. Bail is not available for First-Degree Murder charges. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m., April 18, 2018 before Judge Kessler.

The case is being prosecuted by First Assistant District Attorney Edward F. McCann Jr. and Assistant Chief of Trials Division Lauren Heron.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.