

Ta'Mon F. Ford charged with two counts of First-Degree Murder in Jones case

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EDWARDSVILLE - State's Attorney Tom Gibbons has filed charges this afternoon against an 18-year-old Alton man in connection with the Monday shooting death of 11-year-old Romell Jones who was standing outside the Alton Acres Youth Center at the time of the shooting.

Ta'Mon F. Ford was charged with two counts of First Degree Murder (Class M Felony). Officers with the Alton Police Department responded to the Youth Center in response to a report of shots fired at approximately 5:16 p.m. on Jan. 11, 2016. Romell Jones had been shot once in the back. He was transported to St. Anthony's Hospital in Alton where he was pronounced deceased shortly thereafter.

During the course of the investigation, which was handled by the Major Case Squad who were called to assist by the Alton Police Department, it was discovered that Ford had been involved in an ongoing verbal dispute on social media with several individuals, including at least two of whom were at the scene of the shooting. It is believed that Ford was coming to the scene to confront those individuals involved in the dispute. The victim did not have any connection to the dispute.

Witnesses described a man firing a gun out of a red vehicle before it fled the scene. Investigators determined that it was Ford who fired his 9mm handgun from above the roof of a 1999 red 4-door Oldsmobile Alero. There were five other individuals in the vehicle which was discovered by police on Wednesday, January 13th, however, there are no additional charges at this time.

State's Attorney Tom Gibbons offered his condolences to the family of Romell Jones.

“This is an absolutely heartbreaking tragedy. It leaves me saddened to have to start 2016 off with a young boy losing his life in such a senseless, violent way,” said Gibbons. “I’m also tremendously angry. This defendant’s actions showed that he had a complete disregard for the life of this young boy and everyone else at the Youth Center. He made the decision to try and resolve a dispute with a gun and now my office is going to do everything they can to ensure a lengthy prison sentence to ensure that he will no longer be a threat to our community.”

Sentence range for a murder conviction is 20-60 years in prison, however, because a firearm was used, Ford is eligible for an additionally 25-year sentence. If convicted, he will have to serve 100 percent of his sentence. Ford is currently in custody in Alton and will be transported to the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville where he will be held without bond as set by Circuit Judge Richard Tognarelli.

State's Attorney Gibbons praised the work of the Major Case Squad and Alton Police Department as well as Assistant State's Attorney Josh Jones and his office’s Violence Crimes Unit for their tireless work that went into solving the case. Additionally, he thanked the medical personnel and the Coroner’s Office for their assistance as well.

These charges, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

Major Case Squad Press Conference video below: