

# **Homicide Victim Identified: Two Men Face First-Degree Murder Charges, Another Woman Obstruction Of Justice Charge**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - The Alton Police Department made arrests in the homicide that occurred about 12:43 a.m. on Sunday, October 11, 2020, in the area of 300 block of State Street in Alton.

The victim has been identified as Terence L. Hicks, 34, of Madison.

Based on the investigation, today, the Madison County State's Attorney's Office charged multiple individuals with felony offenses related to their involvement in this investigation.



Charleton K. Merchant, 27, of Alton, was charged with (4) counts First Degree Murder, Mob Action Aggravated Battery and Unlawful Possession of a Weapons by a Felon Merchant's bond has been set at No Bond, by the Honorable Judge Tognarelli.

Aareon Vaughn, 27, of Alton, was charged with (2) counts First Degree Murder, Mob Action and Aggravated Battery. Vaughn's bond has been set at No Bond, by the Honorable Judge Tognarelli.



Terrea D. Gates, 30, of Alton, was charged with Obstructing Justice. Gates bond has been set at \$20,000.

All subjects that have been formally charged are currently in custody at the Alton Police Department.

"Alton Police officers were patrolling the downtown area of Alton when they heard the sound of a gunshot coming from the area of West Fourth Street and State Street," Alton Police Chief Marcos Pulido said. "As those officers began responding to that area, the Alton Police Department started receiving 9-1-1 calls reporting the gunshot as well.

"Within moments, two Alton Police Officers arrived on scene and found that an adult male had sustained a gunshot wound, while in the 300 block of State St. Alton Fire Department Paramedics were immediately summoned to the scene, while officers and a bystander began providing life-saving measures to the gunshot victim. The victim was transported to a local Alton hospital where he was later pronounced dead."

Pulido said additional officers arrived on scene and began attempting to gather information from any potential witnesses. Officers were provided some information

related to this investigation while detectives with the Alton Police Department Criminal Investigations Division were also summoned to the scene.

"Over the course of several days since this tragic event happened, several Alton Police Officers and Detectives worked jointly with the Madison County State's Attorney's Office Violent Crimes Unit to investigate the events that led up to and including what happened at the time of the shooting," Chief Pulido said. "We want to share that this was not a random act of violence and the people involved in this incident were familiar to each other."

*These charges, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.*