



Man Charged For First-Degree Murder In Case That Dates Back To 2017

by Submitted by Illinois State Police
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EAST ST. LOUIS – On April 24, 2023, the St. Clair County State’s Attorney’s Office approved one count of First-Degree Murder (Class M Felony) and one count of Aggravated Battery with a Firearm (Class X Felony) for 33-year-old James D. O’Neal of Belleville. The charges are stemming from a 2017 shooting that left one individual fatally wounded and one individual severely injured.



On August 13, 2017, Illinois State Police (ISP) Zone 6 and East St. Louis Police Department responded to a reported shooting in the former Norman E. Owens housing complex in East St. Louis, IL where 21-year-old Phillip S. Smith of East St. Louis, IL and a 21-year-old male of Belleville, IL had been struck by gunfire during an attempted robbery. Smith succumbed to his injuries and the 21-year-old Belleville man was transported to an area hospital with multiple gunshot wounds and was later released.

After a thorough investigation, ISP agents arrested 20-year-old Devonte Lindsey of Centreville, IL on November 3, 2017, and 24-year-old Shavon Brownlee of East St. Louis, IL on November 15, 2017, in connection with the shooting. Those individuals have since been sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

On April 25, 2023, ISP agents, along with U.S. Marshals, arrested 33-year-old James D. O'Neal of Belleville, on the above charges. O'Neal is housed at St. Clair County Jail. No further information will be disseminated.

The public is reminded that all persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.