



NEWS RELEASE

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**ARRESTS MADE IN MURDER OF OFF DUTY NEWARK
POLICE DETECTIVE MICHAEL MORGAN SLAIN
DURING A ROBBERY IN PATERSON**

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

November 9, 2011

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announced this morning the arrest of two individuals in connection with the killing of off duty Newark police Detective Michael Morgan, Jr., who was slain in Paterson on November 7, 2011 during a robbery. Jerome Wright, 24 years of age of various addresses in Paterson and Newark, and Nashali Gadson, 19 years age from Newark, have been charged in the robbery/murder of Detective Morgan, as well as the robberies of two women that took place during the early morning hours of November 7, 2011.

At approximately 2:45 a.m. on Monday November 7, 2011, a 32 year old woman was robbed at gun point in Paterson. Her robber put a gun to the back of her head and forced her to lie on the ground as he robbed her. The robber stole her purse, containing a cell phone, credit card and money. The robber was described

as a dark skinned African-American male, in his 20's, approximately 5'9" and 130 lbs, with an Afro haircut, wearing a red shirt, blue jeans and a black hooded jacket. Surveillance video later obtained showed a male matching the above description exit a dark four door motor vehicle and quickly walk towards the victim. The suspect was then seen running back to the car and fleeing the area.

At approximately 3:10 a.m., off duty Newark Police Detective Michael Morgan escorted a female to her car outside the area of 504 Straight Street in Paterson. An African-American male matching the description of the man who had just robbed the earlier victim at gun point approached the female and Detective Morgan. The male pulled a gun on the two and demanded their money. During the robbery, the assailant, later identified as 24 year old Jerome Wright shot Detective Morgan in the torso, fatally wounding him. After shooting Detective Morgan, Wright continued to rob the female. He stole her purse, which contained money. Wright also stole the wallet of Detective Morgan, which contained his police identification, before fleeing on foot. Surveillance video later obtained showed Wright exiting a dark colored motor vehicle, approach Detective Morgan and the female, before he runs back to the motor vehicle and flees the area. The robbery and murder were caught on the surveillance tape.

A significant police investigation ensued, involving members of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, the Paterson Police Department, the Newark Police Department, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, the Passaic County Sheriff's Department, New Jersey State Police, the United States Marshals Service, and the City of Philadelphia Police Department.

At approximately 11:30 a.m. on November 7, 2011, the first robbery victim's credit card was used at a Foot Locker in the City of Newark. Video surveillance showed the purchaser, and he matched the description of the man who robbed the two females and shot Detective Morgan. The first robbery victim positively identified the male in the Foot Locker video as the man who robbed her earlier that morning at gun point.

On November 8, 2011, the Paterson Police Department received information from an individual who indicated he/she knew the identity of the killer.

Based upon information developed, law enforcement was able to locate and arrest Wright in a hotel in the Philadelphia area. Located with Wright was his girlfriend Nashali Gadson, 19 years of age from Newark. Both Wright and Gadson have been charged with Felony-Murder, three counts of Armed Robbery, Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose and Unlawful Possession of a

Weapon. Wright will also be charged with the purposeful/knowing Murder of Detective Morgan. The charges of Murder and Felony Murder carry a sentence of 30 years to life in New Jersey State Prison.

Bail has been set at \$1.5 million for Wright. No bail amount has yet been set for Gadson. Both remain in the custody of law enforcement. Neither the gun nor the robbery proceeds have been recovered at this time.

A criminal charge is merely an accusation. Despite this accusation, the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.