

**News Release from  
Acting Monroe County District Attorney  
Perry Duckles**

September 18, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Jury Finds Taquida Hendrix Guilty of Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree for the  
Homicide of 5-year-old Malakai Stovall**

Rochester, NY- On Thursday, September 18, 2025, a Monroe County jury convicted 32-year-old Taquida Hendrix of Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, Arson in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, and Assault in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree for killing 5-year-old Malakai Stovall by setting a duplex on fire.

Shortly after 2:00 AM on July 29, 2024, Rochester Firefighters and Rochester Police Officers responded to a three-alarm fire at a multi-family home on Portland Avenue. Inside the home was 5-year-old Malakai Stovall and his 19-year-old babysitter. Firefighters rescued Malakai, but he suffered severe injuries and was taken to Strong Memorial Hospital, where he died three days later.

The Rochester Police Department immediately started investigating this case as an arson. It was determined that 31-year-old Taquida Hendrix was responsible for setting the fire that took the life of Malakai Stovall. The child was not the intended target. Taquida Hendrix doused the front porch of the Portland Avenue home with a flammable substance and ignited it, causing the fire. Taquida had assistance from her sister, 22-year-old Tiakayla Hendrix, and 36-year-old Roy Chambers. Both Taquida Hendrix and Tiakayla Hendrix were arrested for their involvement in Malakai's murder and the arson.

On August 26, 2025, Tiakayla Hendrix and Roy Chambers pled guilty to Arson in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree for their roles in assisting Taquida Hendrix in the arson. Tiakayla Hendrix will be sentenced to 12 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision and Roy Chambers will be sentenced to 9 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kevin Sunderland, Chief of the Local Courts Bureau and Special Assistant District Attorney Janna Jehlen, of the Special Victims Unit.

“Malakai Stovall was a joyful, energetic 5-year-old boy who was the light of his family’s lives,” said Assistant District Attorney Kevin Sunderland. “Taquida Hendrix intentionally started the fire that ripped this young child from his entire family. While I am relieved that the jury made the correct decision, this remains a devastating loss. Today’s conviction would not be possible without the work from the Rochester Firefighters who responded and carried Malakai out of the house, the Rochester Police Department who led this tragic investigation, the medical professionals who responded and worked on this child, and the cooperation and support we received from the community. I sincerely hope that Malakai’s family can find justice in today’s verdict as they continue to remember and mourn their loved one outside of the courtroom.”

“Every homicide that comes to this office is a tragedy for this community, but the murder of a young child is especially difficult,” said Acting District Attorney Perry Duckles. “Although Malakai Stovall was not her intended target, Taquida Hendrix set the house ablaze without a care of whose lives were destroyed. I sincerely hope that she will use her time the New York State Department of Corrections to reflect on Malakai, his family, and all she stole from our community. On behalf of the entire office, I share my deepest condolences for Malakai’s family and hope that today’s verdict brings a sense of justice for this unfathomable loss.”

Taquida Hendrix will be sentenced on November 3, 2025, in front of New York State Supreme Court Justice Miller.

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