

OFFICE OF THE MONROE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Honorable Brian P. Green, District Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tovontay Haygood Sentenced to 30 Years for his Involvement in the Homicides of Derrick Ellis and Karen Wargo

Rochester, NY- On Monday, October 5, 2026, New York State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Moran sentenced 33-year-old Tovontay Haygood to 30 years in the New York State Department of Corrections, followed by five years of post-release supervision. Haygood previously pleaded guilty to two counts of Manslaughter in the 1st Degree for his role in the separate homicides of Derrick Ellis and Karen Wargo.

On September 19, 2023, Rochester Police Officers responded to the corner of Diringer Place and North Goodman Street, where they located 48-year-old Derrick Ellis suffering from a gunshot wound to the upper body. Mr. Ellis was immediately transported to Strong Memorial Hospital, where he died from his injuries. Rochester Police Detectives determined that Mr. Ellis was standing on the porch of a residence on Diringer Place when he was shot.

On July 9, 2025, Rochester Police Officers responded to Pleasant Street near North Clinton Avenue, where they located a deceased woman on the sidewalk who was later identified as 46-year-old Karen Wargo. The Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office determined that Ms. Wargo died from a combination of blunt force trauma to the head and asphyxiation. Following a thorough investigation that included surveillance video evidence, Tovontay Haygood was arrested for the homicide.

While Haygood remained in custody awaiting trial for the homicide of Karen Wargo, the Rochester Police Department's Major Crimes Unit worked alongside the Monroe County District Attorney's Office to continue investigating the homicide of Derrick Ellis. Following a detailed investigation, Haygood was also indicted for Mr. Ellis' homicide.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jessica Wagner, Deputy Chief of the Special Victims Unit.

“This defendant was responsible for two separate acts of violence that took the lives of Derrick Ellis and Karen Wargo,” said Assistant District Attorney Jessica Wagner. “These were complex investigations that required our office to work closely with the Rochester Police Department to ensure that both homicides were fully investigated and that the defendant was held accountable. I want to thank the Rochester Police Department’s Major Crimes Unit for their persistence and dedication throughout these investigations. I want to especially thank the community that came forward with evidence. Without this cooperation, Tovontay Haygood may have never been identified for these disturbing homicides. Most importantly, I hope today’s sentence provides some measure of closure to the families and loved ones of Mr. Ellis and Ms. Wargo.”

“Tovontay Haygood took the lives of two members of our community in two separate homicides, leaving two families to endure tremendous loss,” said Monroe County District Attorney Brian Green. “Today’s sentence ensures that he will spend decades in prison for his actions. I commend Assistant District Attorney Jessica Wagner and the Rochester Police Department for their diligent work connecting this defendant to both homicides and ensuring that he was held accountable for the lives he took. My thoughts remain with the families and loved ones of Derrick Ellis and Karen Wargo as they continue to grieve.”

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