

Defendant Who Caused Fatal New Bedford Crash Before Fleeing, Sentenced to Prison

A 23-year-old South Easton woman, who in March 2019 caused a fatal car crash in New Bedford and then fled the scene, was sentenced on Friday to serve 14 to 16 years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Jennaya Elsa Bennett-Werra, who at the time of the incident was named James Bennett-Werra, pleaded guilty in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging her with Manslaughter, Reckless Motor Vehicle Homicide, Leaving the Scene-Death Resulting, Assault and Battery with a Dangerous Weapon-Causing Serious Bodily Injury, Leaving the Scene of Personal Injury and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon.

On March 27, 2019, at approximately 9:49 AM, New Bedford Police received a 911 call for a motor vehicle crash at the intersection of Ashley Boulevard and Tallman Street. New Bedford Police and Fire arrived on scene and discovered two occupants of a Toyota Corolla seriously injured. The occupants, Janet Murphy-Hebert and her son, Kyle Murphy, were rushed to Rhode Island Hospital in Providence. Murphy-Hebert succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced deceased in the emergency room. Murphy suffered 14 broken ribs, lacerations on his lung and liver, a broken right shoulder and nerve damage in his right leg from his knee to his ankle.

The 2010 Toyota Corolla was traveling North on Ashley Boulevard prior to the collision.

The second vehicle involved in the crash was a 2017 Chevrolet Malibu, operated westbound on Tallman Street by the defendant. The Malibu, which was traveling at 64 MPH in a 30 MPH zone,

failed to stop at the stop sign on Tallman Street and Ashley Boulevard, where it struck the passenger side of the Toyota. The Toyota rotated 80 degrees where it struck a light pole 38 feet away, then rotated 33 degrees, making secondary contact with the Malibu, and then rotated 37 degrees striking a metal fence.

At the crash scene, a police detective helped the defendant out of the Malibu and asked the defendant to sit on the curb so he could provide aid to the occupants of the Toyota. The defendant fled on foot while the detective was tending to the occupants of the Toyota.

After fleeing the scene, the defendant used someone's phone and arranged for an Uber to take the defendant to Raynham. The defendant was eventually arrested in Pawtucket, RI on Saturday, March 30, 2019.

On Friday in Superior Court, the defendant also admitted to a violation of probation and parole based on the new offenses. At the time of the crash, the defendant was on parole and probation for a 2016 conviction to an attempted robbery of a Rockland Trust Bank in Attleboro.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Michael Cahillane.

"The defendant, who was already on probation and parole for an attempted robbery, engaged in reckless and wanton conduct by fleeing from the police and killing and seriously injuring two innocent people. Despite causing grievous injuries, the defendant fled the scene and had to be arrested in Rhode Island several days later. This was outrageous conduct and the sentence imposed by the court was appropriate. I hope the victim's surviving children can move forward with their lives," District Attorney Quinn said.