

Affidavit of Probable Cause
Detective Karl Johnston
HO25-00011
2/23/2025

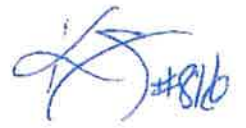
On February 22, 2025, at approximately 11:16 p.m., dispatchers from the Princeton Township Police Department received a 9-1-1 emergency call from an individual later identified as Matthew Hertgen (DOB: [REDACTED]/93), who advised that there was a fire and a dead body inside his residence located at [REDACTED], Princeton, New Jersey 08542. During the call, Matthew identified the dead person as his brother, J [REDACTED] H [REDACTED] (DOB: [REDACTED]/98), and advised dispatchers that J [REDACTED] has been deceased on the floor of his residence for approximately thirty to forty minutes. Dispatchers asked Matthew how J [REDACTED] was injured and Matthew stated, "I'm not gonna go into any more details right now." Matthew Hertgen advised dispatchers there had also been a fire inside the apartment and that he was alone in the residence with J [REDACTED] H [REDACTED]. Dispatchers asked Matthew if any weapons were involved in the incident to which he stated, "...like I said, I'm not going into any more details..."

Princeton Patrol officers subsequently arrived at [REDACTED] and were met at the front door by Matthew Hertgen, who reiterated that there was a dead body in the apartment. Patrol officers entered the residence and discovered J [REDACTED] H [REDACTED] deceased on the dining room floor with a large pool of blood around his head and torso. Additionally, J [REDACTED] appeared to have sustained severe blunt force trauma to the back of his head as well as a large laceration to his chest and abdomen which exposed his chest cavity. Further, J [REDACTED] sustained lacerations to his right eye and his right eyeball was not visible.

Additionally, patrol officers observed a cup of what they believed to be blood, along with blood smeared eating utensils and a blood smeared plate on the dining room table next to J [REDACTED] body. Further, there was a golf club lying on the floor near the body of J [REDACTED] H [REDACTED] with blood on the head of the club. Patrol officers also discovered a deceased feline in the living room on an ottoman. The feline appeared to have suffered blunt force injuries and was also partially burned.

Patrol officers subsequently detained Matthew Hertgen. While placing Matthew in handcuffs, officers observed abrasions and scratches on both of Matthew hands. When the officers inquired as to how and when Matthew sustained the injuries, Matthew advised that he "went into a fit of madness... maybe like forty minutes ago." Matthew was subsequently transported to Princeton Police Headquarters. Patrol officers notified members of the Mercer County Homicide Task Force ("HTF") and secured the residence pending application of a search warrant.

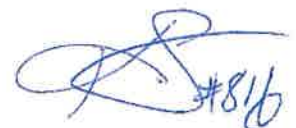
Members of HTF initiated their investigation and were able to speak with D [REDACTED] H [REDACTED] - Matthew Hertgen's brother. D [REDACTED] advised that he was with Matthew Hertgen during the evening of February 22, 2025. D [REDACTED] explained that Matthew has suffered from severe mental illness for the past five years. He further explained that when he spoke with Matthew earlier that day, Matthew was extremely distressed, despondent, and experiencing terrifying visions. Wanting to help him, D [REDACTED] picked up Matthew at [REDACTED] at approximately 4:30 p.m. D [REDACTED] and Matthew went to the grocery store and then to D [REDACTED] residence [REDACTED]



where they remained until approximately 10:00 p.m. At that time, D████ drove Matthew to ██████████ and walked him up to the apartment. D████ walked Matthew to the door and briefly entered the apartment, where he saw their brother J████ H████. After a brief conversation with J████ D████ left the apartment and returned to his apartment ██████████. D████ did not observe any other individuals in the apartment.

At approximately 10:10 p.m., D████ sent a text message to J████ advising him that Matthew was struggling with “his visions” and to contact him immediately if he needed any help. J████ responded to the text message stating “will do”, and thanked D████ for the help. At approximately 10:28 p.m., D████ sent text messages to Matthew, inviting him to join him on a hike with D████ the following day and advising Matthew to “hang in there.” Matthew did not respond to these text messages.

It should be noted that approximately forty-five minutes later, Matthew called 9-1-1 reporting that J████ was deceased and advised the 9-1-1 dispatcher that J████ has been deceased for approximately thirty to forty minutes. Detectives later met with Matthew Hertgen at Princeton Police Headquarters to conduct a formal interview. During the interview, detectives provided Matthew with his Miranda rights. When asked if Matthew wished to waive his rights and speak with detectives, he provided no response and sat in silence. The interview was subsequently terminated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, followed by the number #816.