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Mother and Son Charged in the Murder of London Thomas

Prosecutor Kym Worthy has charged Jalen Pendergrass, 23 of Inkster and Charla Pendergrass, 49, of Clawson, in connection with the homicide of London Thomas, 17, of Detroit. Ms. Thomas had been the girlfriend of Jalen Pendergrass.

On April 5, 2025, Ms. Thomas was reported missing by her sister to the Inkster police Department. She was last seen at approximately 4:00 a.m., when she was dropped off at Jalen Pendergrass' house in the 27260 block of Carlisle Street in Inkster. It is alleged that Jalen Pendergrass and Ms. Thomas had been involved in a relationship, but that it had allegedly ended at the time she arrived at the house in Inkster. On April 6, 2025, Ms. Thomas's mother reported her missing to the Detroit Police Department when she did not return to her home on Albert Street. She was not seen alive after being at home of Jalen Pendergrass.

On April 5, 2025, the Inkster Police Department conducted the initial investigation of the case. Shortly thereafter, the Detroit Police Department, the FBI and the Michigan State Police joined the investigation.

On April 26, 2025, the Inkster Police received information from a male friend of Defendant Charla Pendergrass, and that information was given to the FBI. On April 7, 2025, he alleged that she called him and asked him to transport a sealed plastic bin with unknown contents. He received and placed the bin in a SUV on Millard Street in Southfield on April 11, 2025. On April 26, 2025, the Michigan State Police Department responded to the Millard Street address to assist the FBI and the Detroit Police Department to conduct a search.

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The search led to the discovery of Ms. Thomas' lifeless body in the bin in the SUV on Millard Street. Her remains were taken to the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office. It was determined that Ms. Thomas died from asphyxia and that the manner of death was homicide.

The evidence shows that Defendants Jalen and Charla Pendergrass allegedly committed the homicide of Ms. London Thomas. The extensive facts and evidence will be presented in court at the preliminary examination.

Defendants Jalen Pendergrass and Charla Pendergrass are currently in custody and have each been charged with Second Degree Murder, which carries a penalty of life in prison or any term or years, and Tampering with Evidence, which carries a 10-year maximum penalty.*

Both defendants were arraigned this morning in 22nd District Court before Judge Sabrina Johnson. Defendant Jalen Pendergrass was remanded. Defendant Charla Pendergrass received a \$5 million cash bond. The Probable Cause Conference is scheduled for October 22, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.. Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Dominic DeGrazia will prosecute the case.

"I am proud of the excellent work that has been done in this case. It has taken countless hours of investigation, and diligent work by the Michigan State Police, the Detroit Police Department, and the FBI. As a result of that work, we have been able to charge and bring the perpetrators of this cruel and deadly crime to justice," said Prosecutor Kym Worthy.

*The charges are allegations and defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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