

Formal Charges Filed In Child Death Case

(KAIR)--Formal charges are filed against the 30-year-old Atchison man accused of the Friday night death of his girlfriend's five-year-old daughter, following a vehicle pursuit that began in Atchison and ended tragically in Leavenworth.

Leavenworth County Prosecutor Todd Thompson, during a Wednesday morning press conference, said Marcus McGowan made his first appearance in a Leavenworth County courtroom Wednesday morning, charged with six counts. "He was read those charges in front of Judge [Gunnar] Sundby. Those six counts are first degree murder, he was charged with fleeing and elude of law enforcement officers, he was charged with aggravated endangering a child, he was also charged with aggravated assault on law enforcement officers...and he was charged with a criminal in possession of a firearm," Thompson stated. "His next court appearance is August 8th at 8:30 and the Judge has given him a million dollar bond."

The felony first degree murder charge arises from the death of Cadence Harris, who was killed as a result of the Friday night altercation, which police have said involved an exchange of gunfire with McGowan. Police that night said McGowan was the one who fired the bullet that killed Harris, but Thompson would not provide a definitive answer when asked that question specifically during the press conference. "I am not going to go into any further evidence about this at this time. That's going to be something we save for the court." Thompson further explained his hesitation at answering such specific questions by saying, "I'm not going to be able to go into any evidence. I can only keep to what the complaint has said for you as well as that it is an ongoing investigation."

Prior to the question being asked, he explained that felony first-degree murder can be filed under varying circumstances. "It's the felonious killing of a human being during the commission of an inherently dangerous crime which would be the aggravated endangering of a child. It's also charged in the alternative and would be the felonious killing of a human being in the commission of an inherently dangerous crime which would be a fleeing and elude."

The fatal Friday night pursuit began following an altercation, apparently between McGowan and his girlfriend, at an Atchison residence. It was at some point during that incident that he drove from the residence with young Cadence as his passenger.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is continuing to oversee the ongoing investigation.

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