



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ULSTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES ARRAIGNMENT ON SEALED INDICTMENT IN TOWN OF PLATTEKILL NEW YEAR'S DAY MURDER**

KINGSTON, NY— On March 10, 2023, Ulster County District Attorney's Office arraigned Junando Dawkins, age 29, of Newburgh, in connection with an indictment charging him with Murder in the Second Degree and three counts of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree. The defendant was remanded to Ulster County Jail without bail by the Honorable Sara McGinty following his extradition from North Carolina. Defendant was apprehended at Fort Bragg where he was about to deploy overseas as a Sergeant in United States Army.

The indictment stems from a homicide investigation conducted by the New York State Police, Highland in collaboration with Investigators and assistant district attorneys of Ulster County District Attorney's Office into the death of Daniel Spotards, a 41-year-old father of two, whose body was found at the end of his driveway in the Town of Plattekill on January 2, 2023. A local sanitation worker found the body and called 911; the ensuing investigation showed that Mr. Spotards was shot multiple times on January 1, 2023.

The defendant faces up to a 25 years to life in State Prison if convicted of Murder in the Second Degree; the minimum possible sentence is 15 years to life.

**Chief Assistant District Attorney Emmanuel Nneji**, the lead prosecutor in the case, said "The taking of another person's life is such an affront to human dignity and a threat to all of our collective sense of safety and comfort; we will work tirelessly and persistently in collaboration with our local law enforcement agencies to secure our safety and comfort and see that justice is done."

The speed of this investigation and indictment is a testament to the tenacious attention to detail and around-the-clock work of our State Police investigators, whose dedication and expertise solved a murder in which the perpetrators had done all that they could to evade detection and arrest. It is also an affirmation that solving violent crimes requires citizens to say something when they see something.

The case is being prosecuted by **Chief Assistant Nneji Assistant District Attorney** and **Assistant District Attorney Sajaa Ahmed**. Defendant is represented by Kingston attorney **Thomas K. Petro**.

Under our laws all defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the Ulster County District Attorney's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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