

Fourth man Connected to November Homicide in New Bedford Arrested and Arraigned



District Attorney Sam Sutter today announced that a fourth man connected to the November 23rd murder of Sharrone Stafford has been apprehended and was arraigned in New Bedford District Court.

Antonio L. Rodrigues, Jr., 29, of 48 Summer St. was arrested by New Bedford Police Wednesday shortly after 7 p.m. during the execution of a drug-related search warrant at his home on Summer Street. Mr. Rodrigues is charged with firearm-armed assault with intent to murder and accessory to murder-after the fact connected to the murder of Mr. Stafford. Mr. Rodrigues was also charged last night with resisting arrest, possession with intent to distribute cocaine and possession with intent to distribute cocaine-subsequent offense after

police seized a bag of cocaine, numerous cut baggies, a scale and nearly \$3,500 in currency inside his apartment.

Mr. Rodrigues was ordered held on \$60,000 cash bail during his arraignment in New Bedford District Court today. He is due back in court for a status conference on April 23rd.

Assistant District Attorney Dennis Collins, who is coordinating the investigation into the homicide, handled the arraignment today.

The chief suspect in the murder, Hailton DaCosta, 25, of 85 Mosher St. was indicted late last month on charges of murder, armed assault with intent to rob and possession of an illegal firearm. He is currently being held without bail.

Two other men arrested by police days after the murder still have cases pending in New Bedford District Court connected to the homicide.

Elito Mendes, 21, of 211 County Street, who is charged with accessory to murder after the fact, carrying an illegal firearm, armed robbery, and the obstruction of justice portion of the witness intimidation statute, was ordered held on \$150,000 cash bail.

Samir Baptista, 27, of 115 Norwell Street, who is charged with accessory to murder before the fact, was ordered held without bail during his arraignment.

Police received calls reporting gunshots in the area of Winsor and Crapo streets around 11:45 on November 23rd. Upon arrival at the scene, police and rescue personnel located a male victim lying in the street on Winsor Street, near where it intersects with Crapo Street. The male victim was later identified as Sharone Stafford, 31, of New Bedford.

Mr. Stafford was rushed to St. Luke's Hospital, where he was pronounced dead shortly after midnight on November 24th