



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

NEWS RELEASE

Brendan F. Kelly - Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: ISP Public Information Office

ISP.PIO.Personnel@illinois.gov

Illinois State Police Arrests Two Suspects for First-Degree Murder Following Washington Park Homicide

WASHINGTON PARK – Illinois State Police (ISP) Division of Criminal Investigation Zone 6 Major Crimes Unit Special Agents arrested 18-year-old Brandon Bland Jr. of East St. Louis for First Degree Murder (Class M Felony) and 19-year-old Maliyah Lancaster of Washington Park for First Degree Murder (Class M Felony) and Unlawful Possession of a Weapon - Machine Gun/Automatic Weapon (Class 2 Felony).

On August 1, 2026, the Washington Park Police Department requested ISP's assistance to investigate a homicide that occurred at 1500 block of North 46th Street in Washington Park at approximately 10:20 p.m. The victim, 22-year-old Eric Swearengen of St. Louis, MO, and a female passenger were stopped at 1422 North 46th Street when the shooting occurred. Swearengen attempted to drive away but crashed one block away at 1524 North 46th Street. Swearengen was pronounced deceased at the scene.

During the investigation, ISP Special Agents quickly identified Bland Jr. as the suspect. On August 13, 2026, ISP Special Agents presented the case to the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office, who approved the above-mentioned charge against Bland Jr. ISP Special Agents later identified Lancaster as an additional suspect.

On October 1, 2026, both Bland Jr. and Lancaster were arrested by ISP Special Agents. On October 2, 2026, the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office approved the above-mentioned charges against Lancaster.

Bland Jr. and Lancaster remain in custody at the St. Clair County Jail awaiting their first court appearances.



Brandon Bland Jr. (M/18)



Maliyah Lancaster (F/19)

The charges are not evidence against the defendants, and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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