



# Genesee County Prosecutor's Office

## David Leyton, Prosecutor



### MAN WHO FLED POLICE CHARGED WITH MURDER IN MOTORIST'S DEATH

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FLINT TWP. -- A North Branch man was charged with murder after he allegedly turned off his headlights to elude police just before a deadly crash.

David M. Thomas, 35, was arrested early Saturday after he crashed into two cars at Miller Road and Ballenger Highway, killing Rondle L. Johnson, 36, of Flint and injuring a woman riding in Johnson's car.

Police said Thomas lost control of his car about 2:30 a.m. after running a red light while headed west on Miller at high speed.

He apparently turned off his headlights to escape a Flint police officer who was trying to stop him for allegedly driving the wrong way on a one-way street in the city.

The Flint officer lost sight of Thomas near Miller and Knight Avenue and was searching neighborhood side streets when Thomas crashed.

Flint Acting Police Chief Gary Hagler could not be reached for comment.

Thomas is charged with second-degree murder and operating a vehicle while intoxicated causing death.

He is the second person this month to be charged with the death of someone after trying to flee police.

A Richfield Township man was charged with manslaughter last week after he allegedly crashed into an Otter Lake woman while speeding away from a state trooper in Forest Township.

Genesee County Prosecutor David S. Leyton said Thomas faces more serious charges because of allegations he turned off his headlights to avoid capture.

"We believe this man committed murder," said Leyton.

Leyton said he hopes the recent deaths of two innocent people don't have a chilling effect on police chases.

"There are far more instances where (police) ought to chase than when they should not," said Leyton. "We have to bring these people to justice."

Each police agency has regulations for when to chase and Leyton said those policies are under constant review by police chiefs.

"They are always looking for ways to do it better and more safely," said Leyton.

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