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# Home News Tribune

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026 | MYCENTRALJERSEY.COM

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## MEET THE NEW JERSEY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE, A MAJOR PART OF STATE COURTS



**Jennifer Sellitti, head of New Jersey's Office of the Public Defender, is focusing on a holistic approach.**  
PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER



**Lily Halpern, the assistant deputy public defender in Bergen County, has been with the office for more than four years.** YANNICK PETERHANS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

## Woodbridge sergeant indicted in 2025 fatal shooting

**Suzanne Russell**  
MyCentralJersey.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

A Woodbridge police sergeant has been indicted in connection with the May 2025 fatal shooting of a Carteret man outside a convenience store in the Port Reading section of Woodbridge.

Woodbridge Sgt. Marco Bruno was indicted on a charge of aggravated manslaughter by a state grand jury, acting under the law that requires presentations to a grand jury in cases involving fatal police encounters. The grand jury heard testimony and evidence in the case and completed deliberations on April 6, 2026, before voting to indict Bruno.

Bruno fired a series of shots that struck and killed Aamir Allen, 35, on May 29, 2025, in Woodbridge.

If convicted of aggravated manslaughter, a first-degree crime, Bruno faces a sentence of 10 to 30 years in New Jersey state prison under the state's No Early Release Act, along

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## 20-year plea offered in Route 1 fatal crash

**Suzanne Russell**  
MyCentralJersey.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK - A Woodbridge man is facing up to 20 years in state prison if he pleads guilty to aggravated manslaughter in connection with a high-speed Route 1 crash in February in which an Edison High School student was killed.

Middlesex County Assistant Prosecutor Erin Campbell, section chief of the crash investigations unit, announced the plea offer Tuesday, April 7 during a brief pre-indictment conference before Middlesex County Superior Court Judge Colleen Flynn.

Campbell said the 20-year state

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# A quest for trust

Kaitlyn Kanzler NorthJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

It's been seen hundreds of times in movies and on television. The harried and overworked public defender comes rushing into a courtroom, barely willing to represent the client and not remembering their name. They fumble through a hearing or a trial, seemingly incompetent or uncaring.

However, public defenders play an important role in the justice system, providing representation to those who can't

afford private attorneys.

Public defenders seem to get a bad reputation thanks to their portrayals on television and in movies, but Jennifer Sellitti, New Jersey's head public defender, said it's just the opposite.

She said the stereotype that newly graduated attorneys who can't find jobs turn to the Public Defender's Office last

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**As New Jersey's chief public defender, Jennifer Sellitti says the office attracts top talent despite a lingering negative perception.**

## Police praised for saving woman in standoff

**Suzanne Russell**  
MyCentralJersey.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

SOUTH BRUNSWICK - Two township police sergeants and an officer are being praised for their actions in saving the life of a woman who was threatening to kill herself with a knife.

Police said officers were negotiating with the woman to drop the knife when they eventually used a Taser to immobilize her. The woman dropped the knife, received immediate medical care and was taken to the hospital, where she is expected to make a full recovery.

According to police, officers were called around 7:34 p.m. April 3 to a Kingston Lane home for a report of a woman experiencing a mental health crisis. The caller said the woman had stabbed herself in the neck and abdomen and was attempting to kill herself.

When Sgt. Brooke Labell, Sgt. Jarrid Harpster and Officer Dale Hubner arrived, the caller directed them to the woman, who was in a bathroom at the back of the home off the kitchen.

Harpster located the woman standing in the dark bathroom holding a knife. The woman was bleeding and told police she wanted to end her life,

authorities said. Harpster remained calm and began negotiating with the woman to drop the knife, while Hubner provided cover.

Labell ran to the back of the home to see if there was another way to view the bathroom, but after finding no access she returned to the kitchen, where she and Harpster continued negotiating with the woman.

Police said the woman gave limited responses and refused to drop the knife. After several minutes, she began to exit the bathroom, still holding

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