

SUPER WOMAN TO BECOME LOIS LANE FOR 'SUPERMAN,' RACHEL BROSNAHAN ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS ... EVEN WHEN IT WAS HER JOB TO ANSWER THEM. **F4**

Sunday

South Jersey TIMES



SOUTH JERSEY

Teen shadowed by a ‘house of horrors’



The home on Ridge Avenue in Gloucester Township where Branndon Mosley, 41, and Brenda Spencer, 39, are accused of holding Spencer's daughter captive for years. It is pictured in May following the couple's arrest. *Matthew Enuco, for South Jersey Times*

Escaping from years of alleged captivity and sex abuse, she faces uncertain future, experts say.

Riley Yates and Matthew Enuco
For South Jersey Times

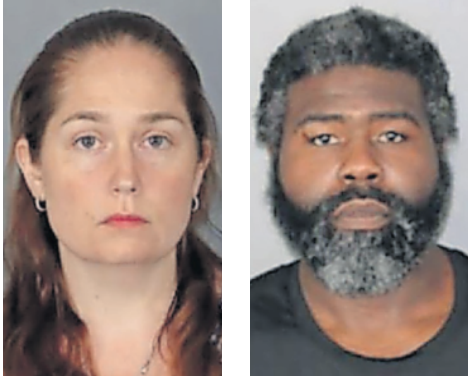
The frantic teen came running to their house, banging on the door and desperate for help.

Her head was shaved, she wore no shoes and her bulky sweatshirt hung from her body, several sizes too large. She hadn't bathed in weeks.

To 36-year-old Michael Lacey, she was a haunting sight, even before she began to pour out a tale of torture so stomach-churning that he wasn't sure what to believe.

For six years, the teen said, she had been held captive by her mother and stepfather, who pulled her from her Camden County school in 2019 after she finished sixth grade. She was chained to a toilet or confined to a dog crate, beaten and sexually abused, she said.

She's 18 years old, but talked like the child she was when she disappeared from the world all those years ago. She laughed oddly and out of place, giggling as she accused her stepfather of molesting her while he was



Spencer and Mosley are accused of keeping the girl captive for years, including chaining her to a toilet and confining her to a dog crate.
Camden County Prosecutor's Office

drunk.

She was unrecognizable to Lacey. She was his next-door neighbor.

"I gotta get away from there," the teen blurted to Lacey and his 75-year-old mother, who live together on a quiet street in Gloucester Township tucked not far from a golf course.

"Picture someone coming to you, not knowing anything about the world and asking a million questions," Lacey recounted in an interview with NJ Advance Media. "That's exactly what she was doing. Exactly."

In May, after the teen's dramatic escape, authorities charged her mother, Brenda Spencer, and stepfather, Branndon Mosley, with crimes that include kidnapping, aggravated assault and endangering the welfare of children. They could face life in prison if convicted.

If true, the accusations would make this a rare case of extreme child abuse, the kind that garners national attention and sparks conversations among onlookers who hope for a bright road ahead for a once-tormented child. But experts say the dash the teen took to Lacey's doorway on May 8 was just the beginning of a complicated path to an unknown future. What happens to kids who break away from upbringings so allegedly deplorable and inhumane?

It's an especially pressing question for the New Jersey teenager, who had already been the victim of sexual abuses committed by her birth father years before the new allegations came to light.

"I believe in children's resilience," said Priscilla Dass-Brailsford, a Georgetown University psychologist. "There is a potential for her to manage this, compartmentalize it in a healthy way. But that all can only happen with good resources, a good support system and good care from the people who are providing her with caregiving."

The teen and her 14-year-old sister, who authorities said also lived in the

SEE ESCAPE, A3

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

Trucker to remain jailed in fatal ‘cat-and-mouse’ crash

“The defendant’s actions were a total disregard for the sanctity of human life,” a judge said Friday.

Matt Gray *For South Jersey Times*

A tractor-trailer driver accused of causing a fatal crash on the New Jersey Turnpike and then laughing about it as he drove away will remain in jail while he awaits trial, a judge ruled Friday.

Joseph M. Nyandwaro, 41, of Pearland, Texas, was driving a tractor-trailer northbound in Gloucester County around 7:30

p.m. on June 22 when police say he rammed a tractor-trailer driven by Osman Aden, 40, of Minnesota.

The impact sent Aden's truck into a concrete barrier in Woolwich Township, police said. Aden's truck, which was hauling watermelons, then crossed the roadway and struck several trees. He died of his injuries.

Video from dashboard cameras in both trucks was played during the Friday detention hearing in Superior Court.

"Nyandwaro was observed intentionally crashing into the victim's tractor trailer, ramming him into the left concrete barrier, and laughing about it as he drove away," police said in the affidavit, citing video taken inside his truck.

His defense attorney argued Friday that the crash was a tragic accident and that his

client should be freed to await trial.

While a public safety assessment by the court recommended pre-trial release for Nyandwaro, Superior Court Judge Renard Scott found that the circumstances of the crash warranted detention.

"Although he does not have a history here in New Jersey, his actions on that day in question were intentional, reckless, and wanton," Scott said. "And because of that, he poses a danger to the community. The defendant's actions were a total disregard for the sanctity of human life."

Nyandwaro is charged with second-degree counts of vehicular homicide and leaving the scene of an accident resulting in death. He is also charged with fourth-degree tampering with evidence.

SEE TRUCKER, A3

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP

Parents renew fight for justice in daughter’s mysterious death

It is claimed in a lawsuit that Tiffany Valiante was the victim of a hate crime and that her death was not properly investigated.

Eric Conklin *For South Jersey Times*

The parents of a South Jersey teenager, who died when she was struck by a NJ Transit train 10 years ago, have filed a new lawsuit alleging her death was misclassified as a suicide because investigators did not consider she may have been murdered because she was a lesbian.

Paul D'Amato, of the Egg Harbor Township-based D'Amato Law Firm, said at a press conference Friday that newly recovered text messages between Tiffany Valiante and at least two others include anti-LGBTQ+ slurs directed at her.

Valiante identified as a lesbian shortly before she died and her family has said they believe she was kidnapped and murdered. No one has been charged in her death.

Among the claims in the lawsuit, filed Friday in Atlantic County state Superior Court, is that NJ Transit investigators should have examined whether she was the victim of a hate crime.

"She'd be 28 years old today," Dianne Valiante, Tiffany's mother, said during Friday's press conference. "We love her and miss her every single second of the day."

The lawsuit names the state of New Jersey, NJ Transit, its police department and the New Jersey Chief Medical Examiner's Office as defendants. NJ Transit declined to comment on the litigation.

The New Jersey Chief Medical Examiner's Office did not respond to a request for comment.

Tiffany Valiante's parents are seeking damages under the New Jersey crime victims' bills of rights, D'Amato said.

D'Amato said he has previously sued to obtain copies of investigative reports from

SEE TIFFANY VALIANTE, A6



Tiffany Valiante identified as a lesbian shortly before she died and her family has said they believe she was kidnapped and murdered on July 12, 2015.
Eric Conklin, for South Jersey Times

MEDFORD

Best in the nation

Tony Cattani took the top honor at an annual conference organized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. **A2**

JERSEY SHORE

A wave of higher costs

Seven Jersey Shore towns increased the price of both their daily and season badges, and another four increased just the daily badge price. **A10**