



# KENT REPORTER

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## Kent man faces charges in car 'swinging' event

King County prosecutors to charge man as accomplice in 2020 Auburn vehicular homicides.

By STEVE HUNTER  
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A 25-year-old Kent man faces unprecedented charges on two counts of accomplice to vehicular homicide for his alleged role in promoting a street "drifting" or "swinging" event that resulted in the death last year of two young women in Auburn.

Probable cause documents were filed Tuesday, Oct. 5 against Jerick Judd in King County Superior Court for his reported role in the deaths of Makenna Heustis, 19, and Kelly Acosta, 23. Both women died in December following injuries after



STEVE HUNTER, KENT REPORTER  
**King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg talks about accomplice vehicular homicide charges against a Kent man at a Oct. 5 press conference outside the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.**

they were struck by a vehicle that went out of control while "swinging" in the 3700 block of I Street Northwest on Nov. 27.

Rondale Hendricks, 20, of Tacoma, was charged Dec. 14 with two counts of vehicular homicide for allegedly killing the two women who attended the "swinging" event and were watching the car spin. Hendricks' trial is scheduled to begin Dec. 7 at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.

Judd remained in custody Tuesday at the county jail at the Regional Justice Center with bail set at \$100,000. He is expected to be arraigned within a week or so when he will enter a plea to the charges.

"It's quite clear that this phenomenon of street racing, drift racing, illegal racing would not have happened and (Heustis and Acosta) would not have died but for the actions of this promoter," King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg said at a Tuesday press conference outside of the Maleng Regional Justice

Center. "This is the first time we have used the accomplice statute in this way, in a vehicular homicide. But it underscores the clear danger to public safety and to every spectator attracted to these events."

Washington State Patrol Trooper Chase Van Cleave, who investigated the case as part of a new multiagency task force formed in March to curtail street racing and drifting activities, explained in probable cause documents about this activity that has popped up across the nation.

"Drifting," also known as "swinging" is when the driver of a vehicle intentionally accelerates and oversteers in hard corners or in circles which causes the rear of the vehicle to lose traction and whip around. During these events, vehicles while spinning are typically surrounded by a large group of onlookers who will occasionally stand in the center of

the swinging vehicles.

"This is a highly and inherently dangerous activity that has resulted in multiple injuries and deaths in our (King) county," Van Cleave wrote. "There has also been other violence associated with the events including multiple assaults, shootings and a firearm-related homicide."

The Kent and Auburn police departments are part of the regional task force.

"I commend our partners at the Washington State Patrol, Kent Police Department, Auburn Police Department, and the Regional Racing Task Force for their diligent investigation which led to today's arrest and charges," Satterberg said. "While sometimes glamorized, reckless racing and drifting outside appropriate venues is exceedingly dangerous,

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## Kent man finally reunited with his Afghan family

By STEVE HUNTER  
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Azizulla Jabarkhail couldn't help but be in a celebratory mood at Sea-Tac Airport after greeting his wife and three young children following their long return home from Afghanistan to Kent.

"I'm so surprised and very happy today," Jabarkhail said to reporters during a dramatic Oct. 1 reunion. "I'm celebrating this day. My family's back here and they're safe."

A former interpreter and cultural advisor for five years alongside U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Jabarkhail arrived in Kent seven years ago, earning his citizenship through his service. His wife is a legal permanent resident and his children are American citizens.

In May, his wife and children, ages 12, 10 and 8 traveled to Afghanistan to visit family with plans to return in August.

"She was depressed and missing her family," Jabarkhail said about his wife's second return trip to Afghanistan after moving here seven years ago.

He didn't go with them for one reason.

"I have to stay here because it's not safe for me," he said of his former job with the U.S. military and how the Taliban would treat him if he were found.

Jabarkhail began to fear for his family's safety after the Taliban took over the county city by city and U.S. troops left Afghanistan at the end of August. His family was unable to get on any of the evacuation flights organized by the U.S. government.

"With the Taliban takeover, I was feeling so sad and so upset," Jabarkhail said. "I had no idea what was going happen to my family."

He tried by cellphone to help guide his family three times to Kabul Airport, but they were unable to get inside through the crowds to show



STEVE HUNTER, KENT REPORTER  
**Chris Franco, center, greets the children of Azizulla Jabarkhail, right, on Oct. 1 at Sea-Tac Airport after their return home with their mother to Kent from Afghanistan.**

American soldiers their passports and had to return to where they were staying.

"They were so shocked," Jabarkhail said about talking to his family during the ordeal. "They had never seen the Taliban. They heard about them and about fighting against government. When the Taliban took over Afghanistan, they were very shocked. They knew the Taliban was against American government and those Afghans who support American government or work for them."

That definitely scared Jabarkhail, if the Taliban somehow discovered his family.

"They have passports and are

American citizens. ...they might be hurt or assassinated," he said.

Jabarkhail said his son saw the Taliban up the road one day.

"They had real guns, and he said he had never seen real guns before. They were so scared. I tried to get them stronger and encourage them."

### Veterans to the rescue

Jabarkhail said getting his family home didn't look promising after U.S. troops left Afghanistan Aug. 31.

"I was very helpless," he said. "It was hard to get them out. I was looking for ways to take them to Pakistan or another country to book a commercial flight for them, but it

was not easy."

A few people suggested he look into smuggling them out.

"I denied that," he said. "Smuggling is illegal and I didn't want to do anything illegal."

Neighboring countries all closed their borders to Afghan refugees.

"There was no hope," he said.

But then a Seattle Times article about veterans helping to get people out of Afghanistan led to Jabarkhail connecting with Chris Franco and Christian Dunham, two Afghan war veterans who were deployed together and continue to help with the ongoing Afghan evacuation and resettlement efforts.

Franco, who lives in Renton and

works for King County, also is the Director of Military and Veterans Affairs for the Truman National Security Project's Seattle Chapter, a group heavily involved in the Afghan evacuation efforts.

"They provided what my family needed to get from Kabul to the United States," Jabarkhail said. "They are the champions and heroes. They saved an American family. Without them I had no hope to bring my family back."

Franco never expected to be in such a role. But he closely watched what was going on in Afghanistan and decided to help.

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## Man faces murder, assault charges in Kent triple shooting

By STEVE HUNTER  
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A 39-year-old Renton man faces charges of first-degree murder and two counts of first-degree assault for reportedly shooting three men on Sept. 19 at a gas station in Kent.

Kent Police and Valley SWAT arrested Joseph B. Dixon on Sept. 27 in Snohomish County after Dixon reportedly rammed unmarked police vehicles in a Safeway parking lot, according to charging papers

filed Sept. 29 by the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Three officers fired at Dixon and hit him once in the lower back. Paramedics transported him to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

Dixon remained in custody Oct. 5 in the county jail at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent. Prosecutors asked for bail to be denied or set a minimum amount of \$5 million because the defendant poses a substantial likelihood of danger.

"In this case, the defendant is accused of shooting three individuals at close range, killing one person," according to a statement from the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. "When he was apprehended by police more than a week later, the defendant, who had a 4-year-old child and another passenger in his car, tried to escape by ramming into vehicles belonging to police and members of the public."

Dixon is accused of killing Devon

Hill, 23, who died of a gunshot wound to the head, according to the King County Medical Examiner's Office.

Dixon is scheduled to be arraigned at 9 a.m. on Oct. 13 in the General Courtroom at the Maleng Regional Justice Center.

Prosecutors also charged Dixon with unlawful possession of a firearm based on previous convictions in King County for second-degree robbery and residential burglary. He has 10 prior felony convictions,

according to court documents.

According to charging documents, Dixon apparently knows one of the shooting victims and a relative of that victim reportedly tried to assault Dixon two days after the shooting.

At about 1:18 a.m. on Sept. 19, Kent officers were dispatched to Meeker Street Bar and Grill, 1721 W. Meeker St., for multiple reports of a shooting, according to charging

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# Event

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as the events of last November make clear. We want the public to know that we will hold people responsible for these dangerous events – including event organizers like Mr. Judd.”

According to court documents, Judd used an Instagram car club page to get people to attend the events and tell them the locations, including the gathering in November when Acosta and Heustis were hit as spectators. A third woman also was injured, but survived. Eventually, investigators

tracked down Judd’s cell-phone number and home address. They also found out he reportedly organized another street event in early December, after one of the two women had died.

One Instagram member messaged Judd prior to the December gathering.

“Someone just died at one of our meets and you said you were going to lie low for a bit!” Judd allegedly replied.

“Yeah we are but we already had this planned so not gonan bail out last min! We are staying low like I’m not even going on my own car lol!”

Then Judd added, “We had this event planned way before that happened.”

Judd reportedly organized another event just last month, according to court documents.

“In recent years, illegal street racing has grown increasingly dangerous, sometimes resulting in the tragic and needless loss of life,” said Kent Police Chief Rafael Padilla. “The successful investigation and prosecution of the offenders in this case should serve as a strong message to would-be illegal street racers and the race organizers that we take their dangerous and often violent actions seriously and we will work tirelessly to identify those involved and ensure they are held accountable for their crimes.”

Illegal street racing has gone on for decades in the industrial area of Kent. The “swinging” events began just in the last couple of years where groups of people and their vehicles take over intersections or even block sections of freeways.

“This is more than just Auburn; this is a regional issue and today this incident shows just how serious of an issue it is,” said Auburn Police Cmdr. Mike Hirman. “We appreciate and thank all our partners who have worked extremely hard to get this done and we also thank the King County prosecuting attorney for filing the charges against the organizer of the street racing event.”

Nearly 70 people have been arrested this year by the regional street racing task force, according to the State Patrol. Many have been charged with crimes or will face charges.

“We have found they go from events in Kent to Des Moines to Tacoma and back to Snohomish County,” said State Patrol Capt. Ron Mead. “We had to adapt our approach to deter this type of behavior and intervene and make arrests.”

Satterberg said his office is confident in the accomplice charges.

“It’s just as complicit as actually participating in the race if you promote,” he said. “This was nothing but a

reckless driving festival.” Mead emphasized near the end of the press conference to remember the families of the two victims.

“Behind these charges, while we are focusing on the individual that organized this event, there is the death of two young women,” he said. “There are families that are forever changed as the result of these tragedies. We should never lose sight on the victims of this. It’s very easy to get focused on the charge. ...but we are trying to do this so families aren’t going into another holiday season with the loss of a loved one. That’s really what this is all about. It’s about saving lives.”

# Family

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“A lot of really wonderful people stepped up in big ways to help save lives and honor our promise to Afghan people,” Franco said during the airport reunion. “But it’s bittersweet. It’s beautiful to see so many people helping

out, but it’s also disappointing to see what has been done and not been done by our government.”

Franco said it should have been a much smoother and safer evacuation to help many others who need to flee the country.

“We had 20 years to get a plan in place for a safe evacuation of our allies and personnel and that didn’t

happen,” Franco said. “It’s an ongoing fight, and I expect it to go on for years. Hopefully, we can negotiate a safe passage for Afghan allies who served with us in our nation’s longest war.”

Franco said there are two interpreters he worked with that the Truman project is trying to get out, but it’s tougher with them than Jabarkhail’s family because

they do not have passports or visas. There are also other families they are working with to get them out of Afghanistan. He estimates the Truman project has helped more than 1,000 people evacuate but thousands more are trying to flee.

About 120 people were on the flight out of Kabul that included Jabarkhail’s family. Private groups managed to

find a charter flight out of the country. The flight flew to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, and then to Chicago. There was a delay in getting landing rights in the U.S., but eventually the flight arrived.

Jabarkhail gave Dunham and Franco plenty of credit for his family’s safe return.

“They are the only two who supported me and helped me

and they got my family back,” he said. “It’s a celebrating day.”

After media interviews and greetings from friends, Jabarkhail, his wife and their three children loaded up their luggage on a cart and headed out of the airport to return to Kent.

“They are home today and reunited after a very long journey,” Franco said.

# Murder

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papers. Police found a small crowd in the parking lot surrounding two men who had been shot.

A 36-year-old man had four gunshot wounds. He told officers he was in his baby mother’s Cadillac SUV when a man shot him. He said he got out of the car and the man got in and drove the vehicle away.

A 23-year-old man had a gunshot wound to his shoulder. He told police that he and two other men came to Circle K, just east of the bar, to get gas. He said his friend, Hill, was still in the car and had been fatally shot.

Both men were transported to Harborview Medical

Center for treatment.

Witnesses told police that a man appeared to be trying to steal the Cadillac and that shots were fired prior to the vehicle leaving at a high rate of speed westbound on West Meeker Street.

An officer was traveling on Reith Road at about 2:40 a.m. looking for the Cadillac when he was flagged down by a pedestrian about a man lying facedown in a gutter along 38th Avenue South. The officer observed a gunshot wound to the man’s head and he was deceased. That man was later identified as Hill.

Shortly after Hill’s body was found, officers a few blocks away found a Cadillac XT6 SUV parked unoccupied in the 3800 block of South 253rd Street. The driver’s side window was partially

rolled down and there was a large pool of blood and a fired cartridge casing in the back passenger seat.

Detectives obtained a search warrant and found inside the car four fired .40 caliber cartridge casings, a fired .40 caliber bullet, a sandwich bag of what appeared to be heroin, and oxycodone pills with the brand name of Percocet, commonly referred to on the street as “Perc30’s,” according to police.

Detectives found a fingerprint on the driver’s side rear exterior quarter panel that they identified as matching a fingerprint of Dixon.

Surveillance video from residences in the West Hill area showed a man walking away from the Cadillac and later being picked up by a black sedan.

Detectives later interviewed one of the shooting victims who told them that on the night of the shooting they drove to Circle K to get wrapping papers for rolling marijuana joints. They were at the gas pumps for less than a minute when a man walked up, opened the rear passenger door and began firing into the vehicle.

On Sept. 20, detectives received a tip about a man bragging about robbing and shooting people and stealing their car and that the man was at the Morning Glory Motel in Bellingham. Police observed surveillance video of the man leaving the motel and getting into a Toyota Rav4. After circulating a bulletin to local law enforcement and reviewing jail booking photographs, detectives identified the man

as Dixon.

Detectives located Facebook pages for Dixon and one of the injured shooting victims. They discovered the man was a Facebook friend with Dixon. They searched the injured man’s cellphone and less than three hours before the shooting saw text messages from a “Joe” requesting to meet.

Police also tracked down another sighting of Dixon on Sept. 21 at the Muckleshoot Casino in Auburn. Auburn Police responded to an assault after casino security broke up a fight between two men. One of the men, related to the shooting victims, found Dixon and reportedly assaulted him.

In a follow-up interview with one of the shooting victims, detectives asked the man if he knew Dixon. The

man said he did but didn’t know why he shot at him.

Eventually, detectives tracked down Dixon in Snohomish County, although court documents did not disclose how they located him. On Sept. 27, police tried to take him into custody at a Safeway parking lot when he reportedly rammed his vehicle into unmarked police vehicles. SWAT officers fired shots at him and hit him once in the lower back.

Police took Dixon into custody and he was transported to Harborview Medical Center. Kent detectives tried to interview Dixon the next day at the hospital. When a detective asked him if he would willing to talk about the incident in Kent, he replied, “No, not without my attorney present.”

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