



# PAULDING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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**To: Metro Atlanta Media**

**For Immediate Release**

## **Arrest Made in West Paulding Arson/Murder**

(Paulding County, GA) Detectives with the Paulding County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division and Agents with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) have been conducting an investigation into what was originally dispatched as a vehicle fire that occurred at 2172 Vinson Mountain Crossing Rockmart, GA 30153 on August 26, 2019. Through the course of the investigation it was determined that a body was located inside the vehicle and the decedent had been murdered.

Because the body was so badly burned a preliminary identification on the remains had been impossible to determine. As a result of an autopsy and investigation by the forensic pathologists at the GBI Crime Lab, the body has been positively identified. Detectives and Agents released the identity of the burned body as that of Austin James Nicholson (W/M, 24 YOA) of Rockmart, GA.

Thus far, one arrest has been made in connection with Nicholson's death. Akeyla Xemaja "KeKe" Philpot (B/F, 23 YOA) was arrested on September 12, 2019 and is being held in the Paulding County Jail with no bond. She is being charged with the following offenses:

- Murder (F)
- Arson (F)
- Influencing Witnesses (F)
- VGCSA Possession of Marijuana With Intent to Distribute (F)

It must be noted that this case is still actively being investigated and more arrests are expected in the coming weeks. If you have any information on this case, please call Detectives and Agents at the Paulding County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division at (770) 443-3015.