

State of Minnesota  
County of Hennepin

District Court  
4th Judicial District

Prosecutor File No. 18A10185  
Court File No. 27-CR-18-20967

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**State of Minnesota,**  
Plaintiff,

**COMPLAINT**  
Order of Detention

vs.

**THOMAS JAMES HOUCK DOB: 04/16/1957**  
18296 CASSCADE DRIVE  
EDEN PRAIRIE, MN 55347  
Defendant.

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The Complainant submits this complaint to the Court and states that there is probable cause to believe Defendant committed the following offense(s):

**COUNT I**

**Charge: Suicide - Aiding**  
Minnesota Statute: 609.215.1  
Maximum Sentence: 15 YEARS AND/OR \$30,000.00  
Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 08/16/2018

Control #(ICR#): 18034424

Charge Description: That on or about August 15, 2018, Thomas James Houck, intentionally advised, encouraged, or assisted another, a known adult female, in taking Victim 1's own life.

## STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Your Complainant, Mark Gustad, is a Detective with the Eden Prairie Police Department and, in that capacity, has investigated the facts and circumstances of this case and believes the following establishes PROBABLE CAUSE:

On or about August 16, 2018, at approximately 2:20 a.m., officers of the Eden Prairie Police Department responded to a known address, located in the City of Eden Prairie, Hennepin County, Minnesota, in response to an emergency phone call made by THOMAS JAMES HOUCK, DOB 4/16/1957, the Defendant herein. In that call, the Defendant told the emergency dispatcher that he woke in the middle of the night to find his wife, a known adult female, Victim 1 herein, had "euthanized herself." The Defendant went on to state that his wife had used nitrogen, wasn't breathing and was laying in her bed with a plastic bag over her head.

Upon arrival, officers observed Victim 1 with a clear plastic bag over her head with a tube, which was connected to a tank of nitrogen, inserted into the bag. Victim 1 was deceased. Near Victim 1 was what appeared to be a handwritten note, which specified she could not endure any more pain and needed a way out of the pain.

The medical examiner responded to the scene and a final autopsy report is pending.

Initially, the Defendant reported to law enforcement that he woke up in the middle of the night to go to the restroom and found Victim 1 had killed herself. The Defendant reported Victim 1 had been in a lot of pain from an unknown cause and no medication was helping.

The Defendant did admit to previously assisting Victim 1 in searching for suicide methods and eventually, on August 15, 2018, accompanied her to the store to purchase the nitrogen and the needed regulator. The Defendant admitted to disposing of the receipts for the purchases of the nitrogen and regulator, but denied that he otherwise assisted her in the suicide.

Complainant froze the scene and obtained a search warrant. Upon returning to the residence, the Defendant reported he had not been completely forthcoming or truthful. In a post-Miranda statement, the Defendant then admitted to helping Victim 1 make the hood out of the plastic bag, which they made based off a document they had downloaded from the internet. The Defendant further stated that he was present when Victim 1 put the bag over her head and that he had, in fact, turned on the nitrogen gas. The Defendant also confessed that he held the bag closed after Victim 1 put it over her head and continued to hold the bag as he turned on the nitrogen gas and the tank emptied. The Defendant further confessed he checked Victim 1's pulse after the nitrogen tank was empty and felt Victim 1 had no pulse.

The Defendant reported he knew what he did was wrong and illegal so he wore gloves during the incident and when it was over, drove to a nearby store and disposed of the gloves and some other items that he did not specify. The Defendant stated he tried to rest, but couldn't and eventually called 911 several hours later.

Law enforcement was able to obtain video of the Defendant and Victim 1 buying the nitrogen tank and also video of the Defendant disposing of the evidence at the nearby store. Police officers were also able to recover a copy of the receipt for the regulator and speak to a sales associate who remembered the Defendant's purchase.

The Defendant is presently in custody.

## SIGNATURES AND APPROVALS

Complainant requests that Defendant, subject to bail or conditions of release, be:  
(1) arrested or that other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court; or  
(2) detained, if already in custody, pending further proceedings; and that said Defendant otherwise be dealt with according to law.

Complainant declares under penalty of perjury that everything stated in this document is true and correct. Minn. Stat. § 358.116; Minn. R. Crim. P. 2.01, subds. 1, 2.

**Complainant**

Mark Gustad  
Detective  
8080 Mitchell Rd  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
Badge: 56

Electronically Signed:  
08/20/2018 11:37 AM  
Hennepin County, mn

Being authorized to prosecute the offenses charged, I approve this complaint.

**Prosecuting Attorney**

Juanita Freeman  
300 S 6th St  
Minneapolis, MN 55487  
(612) 348-5550

Electronically Signed:  
08/20/2018 11:34 AM

**FINDING OF PROBABLE CAUSE**

From the above sworn facts, and any supporting affidavits or supplemental sworn testimony, I, the Issuing Officer, have determined that probable cause exists to support, subject to bail or conditions of release where applicable, Defendant's arrest or other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court, or Defendant's detention, if already in custody, pending further proceedings. Defendant is therefore charged with the above-stated offense(s).

**SUMMONS**

THEREFORE YOU, THE DEFENDANT, ARE SUMMONED to appear on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM before the above-named court at 300 S Sixth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55487 to answer this complaint.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR in response to this SUMMONS, a WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST shall be issued.

**WARRANT**

To the Sheriff of the above-named county; or other person authorized to execute this warrant: I order, in the name of the State of Minnesota, that the Defendant be apprehended and arrested without delay and brought promptly before the court (if in session), and if not, before a Judge or Judicial Officer of such court without unnecessary delay, and in any event not later than 36 hours after the arrest or as soon as such Judge or Judicial Officer is available to be dealt with according to law.

*Execute in MN Only*

*Execute Nationwide*

*Execute in Border States*

**ORDER OF DETENTION**

Since the Defendant is already in custody, I order, subject to bail or conditions of release, that the Defendant continue to be detained pending further proceedings.

Bail: \$70,000.00

Conditions of Release: Make All Appearances; Remain Law Abiding; Surrender Passport; Other: Active CR - checking in with probation

This complaint, duly subscribed and sworn to or signed under penalty of perjury, is issued by the undersigned Judicial Officer as of the following date: August 20, 2018.

**Judicial Officer**

Kathleen Sheehy  
District Court Judge

Electronically Signed: 08/20/2018 02:00 PM

Sworn testimony has been given before the Judicial Officer by the following witnesses:

**COUNTY OF HENNEPIN  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**State of Minnesota**

Plaintiff

vs.

**THOMAS JAMES HOUCK**

Defendant

*LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER RETURN OF SERVICE  
I hereby Certify and Return that I have served a copy of this Order of  
Detention upon the Defendant herein named.*

Signature of Authorized Service Agent:

## DEFENDANT FACT SHEET

**Name:** THOMAS JAMES HOUCK  
**DOB:** 04/16/1957  
**Address:** 18296 CASSCADE DRIVE  
EDEN PRAIRIE, MN 55347

**Alias Names/DOB:**

**SID:** MN18B19123

**Height:**

**Weight:**

**Eye Color:**

**Hair Color:**

**Gender:** MALE

**Race:** White

**Fingerprints Required per Statute:** Yes

**Fingerprint match to Criminal History Record:** Yes

**Driver's License #:**

**SILS Person ID #:** 840953

**SILS Tracking No.** 3031161

**Alcohol Concentration:**

## STATUTE AND OFFENSE GRID

<b>Cnt Nbr</b>	<b>Statute Type</b>	<b>Offense Date(s)</b>	<b>Statute Nbrs and Descriptions</b>	<b>Offense Level</b>	<b>MOC</b>	<b>GOC</b>	<b>Controlling Agencies</b>	<b>Case Numbers</b>
1	Charge	8/16/2018	609.215.1 Suicide - Aiding	Felony	H7001		MN0272600	18034424