

# Attorney claims client shot neighbor in self-defense

**Quinlan Bentley**  
Cincinnati Enquirer  
USA TODAY NETWORK

An 18-year-old was shot and killed after knocking on a neighbor's door in Forest Park. Now that neighbor is facing criminal charges in connection with the killing.

Jaden Smith was fatally shot once in the chest in the 700 block of Northland Boulevard on May 5, according to a criminal affidavit filed in Hamilton County Municipal Court.

Police arrested 38-year-old Domyenic Elahee shortly after the shooting and charged him with murder.

Here's what to know about the shooting and the ongoing criminal case.

## Police say Smith was shot after dispute with 11-year-old. Attorney argues it was self-defense

The shooting happened just outside the front door of Elahee's home following a "verbal altercation" between Smith and Elahee's 11-year-old son, the complaint states.

Police said the murder charge was partly based on Elahee's admissions to investigators.

Neighbors called 911 to report hearing a gunshot and screaming, according to recordings obtained by The Enquirer through an open records request.

One neighbor told dispatchers they were sitting on their couch when they heard a loud boom and that a bullet struck their home.

"It came right through my front door," the neighbor said.

Smith's mom also called 911 to report the shooting, saying she heard the gunshot but didn't see what happened.

"My son just got shot!" she said in a frantic and emotional call.

Clyde Bennett II, Elahee's attorney, said his client was asleep at home when he was awakened by "violent banging."

Elahee's daughter answered the door and when the older man came down to



Forest Park police investigate a homicide at an apartment on Northland Boulevard on the night of May 5. FOX19

see who was knocking, he saw Smith, who Bennett said was reaching into his jacket as if he had a gun.

Bennett said police did not find any firearms on Smith. The attorney said Elahee fired a single shot, believing Smith was armed.

"It's a classic case of self-defense," Bennett said.

A GoFundMe set up to cover Smith's funeral expenses states that the 18-year-old went to his neighbor's house to speak with the family about his younger brother being bullied.

"There was no fight, no threats – just a young man trying to do the right thing," the GoFundMe states. "Jaden's story is one of bravery, love, and heart-breaking loss."

## Bishop says it's time to 'keep the comments down'

Bishop Bobby Hilton, who led a prayer vigil in remembrance of Smith, said it's important to "let people breathe" after fatal shootings like those that took the lives of Smith and 18-year-old Ryan Hinton, who was shot and killed in a confrontation with Cincinnati police on May 1.

"Let's take some time, let's take a break, and let's just pray for one another," Hilton said.

The bishop said that it's important for the community to come together after such tragedies, especially those touched by the violence.

"When something like that happens, sometimes it just helps to see that you're not alone," Hilton said. The bish-

op said he recently learned that Smith attended his church as a child.

Hilton, who is also a Hamilton County chaplain, said he works in the community to bring a semblance of peace after the killing, adding that it's essential to prevent retaliation. He said it's times like these when people should "keep the comments down."

## Neighbor's criminal case ongoing

Hamilton County Municipal Judge Tyrone Yates set Elahee's bond at \$1 million at 10%, meaning he must pay \$100,000 to be released from jail.

If Elahee can post bond, he will be prohibited by court order from owning firearms or being in the apartment complex where the shooting happened.

Jail records show Elahee is being held at the Hamilton County Justice Center. A grand jury will hear the case by May 15 to decide whether Elahee will be prosecuted in Hamilton County Common Pleas Court, where felonies are tried.

# Senate Bill 1 opponents may now collect signatures in Ohio

**Jessie Balmert**  
State Bureau  
USA TODAY NETWORK

An effort to block the sweeping higher education law, Senate Bill 1, can now collect signatures to put the anti-diversity, equity and inclusion legislation up for a statewide vote.

A group of Youngstown State University faculty is leading the effort to block Senate Bill 1, an extensive revision of higher education policy in Ohio. But they are on a tight timeline: they have until the end of June to collect about 248,000 valid signatures to make the fall ballot.

On May 5, they cleared their first hurdle. Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost certified the title and summary language for the proposed referendum to repeal Senate Bill 1.

The next step is collecting signatures from voters in at least 44 of Ohio's 88 counties, in addition to the grand total, which is 6% of the last governor's race's results. They have 90 days from March 28, when Gov. Mike DeWine signed the bill, to collect those signatures.

Senate Bill 1, championed by Sen.

Jerry Cirino, R-Kirtland, bans diversity, equity and inclusion programs at Ohio's public universities and colleges. It also prevents faculty from striking, makes it easier to fire tenured faculty and requires syllabi be posted online.

The bill is already having an impact. Ohio State University shuttered two diversity, equity and inclusion offices. Ohio University announced it would close its Multicultural Center, Pride Center and Women's Center, WOUB reported.

Opponents of the bill face a challenge, because successful referendums to block state laws are rare. The latest attempt was a well-funded effort to block House Bill 6, which included a bailout for two nuclear plants. It failed, but the FBI probe of that campaign led to the conviction of Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder for his role in a state-house corruption scandal.

Before that, Ohio voters successfully overturned an anti-collective bargaining bill in 2011, dealing a political blow to then-Gov. John Kasich.

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