

# The Jambar

The student voice of Youngstown State University since 1931

## TRAGEDY



Bloody footprints mark the scene of Sunday's shooting on Indiana Avenue near the YSU campus. Photos by Joe Giesy/The Jambar.

## Off-campus shooting kills one student, wounds 11

Lamar Salter  
MANAGING EDITOR

A woman and a man came to the door of a two-story white home on Shannon Road in Girard and said they were not yet ready to talk about the death of 25-year-old Youngstown State University senior Jamail Johnson.

The couple said they might want to talk in the coming days about the death of the business major who was only one semester away from receiving his diploma.

Johnson's family, friends, former teachers and fellow students continue to search for an explanation of what went wrong at 55 Indiana Ave. early Sunday morning.

Police have arrested two men in connection with Johnson's death and the wounding of 11 others at the home that was being used by the Omega Psi Phi fraternity for a Saturday night party.

As of early Sunday evening, police had not yet released the names of the suspects.

A 17-year-old senior at Boardman High School, Shavai Owens, was still listed in critical condition at St. Elizabeth Health Center with wounds to her head. The other victims, including six YSU students, were treated and released.

Among the six injured is freshman Jordon Wagner, who was standing next to Johnson and suffered multiple bullet wounds.

Wagner said he believes that fight erupted after a woman pushed a bystander. Wagner said the woman was asked to leave but came back 10 minutes later with a group of people, including some who were armed.

Wagner said Johnson tried to break up the fight and wound up in the crossfire.

"It took a lot of bravery to break up a fight when a man got a gun," Wagner said of Johnson's last moments.

Several others who knew Johnson described him as good-natured and friendly. In fact, his former high school principal John Young said Johnson was the kind of person to break up a fight.

YSU President Cynthia Anderson visited victims at the hospital, and Youngstown Mayor Jay



Jamail Johnson was killed in the shooting incident Sunday morning at 55 Indiana Ave. at an old fraternity house just north of the YSU campus. Photo from Facebook.com.

Williams said police would work hard for a resolution. Others, including students, said they are having a hard

time understanding why the shooting occurred. City police are not discussing possible motives.

*"Someone got shot at  
55 Indiana Ave."*

*See TheJambar.com to listen to the 911 calls.*

### —YSU RESPONDS TO OFF-CAMPUS SHOOTING—

Jordan D. Uhl  
SPORTS EDITOR

Youngstown State University President Cynthia Anderson addressed the media Sunday afternoon in regards to the shooting that took place just north of campus.

"I want to express my deepest sympathies to the family of the student that died in this tragic act of violence, and to ask everyone throughout our Mahoning Valley community and beyond to keep them, their parents and all the other students involved in their

thoughts and prayers," Anderson said. Anderson released a similar statement earlier that morning, which included initial details about the shooting.

"It's a sad day for the YSU family," it read.

The shooting took place at 55 Indiana Ave., a residence where some members of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity lived.

Director of University Communications Ron Cole also fielded questions regarding the specifics of the

YSU RESPONSE PAGE 3

### —POLICE RESPOND TO OFF-CAMPUS SHOOTING—

Christine Darin  
CONTRIBUTOR

On Sunday, Youngstown police addressed more than a dozen reporters trying to answer questions about the city's latest homicide that rocked the Youngstown State University community.

"Any individual who was to come in and act like this, in my estimation, isn't fit to live in a civilized society with the rest of us," Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams said.

Williams joined Police Chief Jimmy Hughes in a conference room in the downtown Youngstown police station. Officials told reporters what they have gathered so far.

Calls were made to the Youngstown Police Department at about 3:39 a.m., and the police were active immediately.

The suspects are not current YSU students, and so far have no connection to the YSU community or the Omega Psi Phi fraternity. The police are not looking at any other suspects.

POLICE RESPONSE PAGE 3

# Students react



"I was by APD frat house when it happened. I got a couple text messages saying, 'Don't go outside.' It's ridiculous. If you need a gun to settle problems, you have problems of your own."

**Kevin Newell,**  
sophomore



"My mom called me to make sure I was OK. If we happened to have gone out, we might have witnessed it."

**Andrew Jepperson,**  
senior



"Honestly, I don't feel an immediate threat. I don't feel like I'm in danger. I wonder what's going to happen now. A lot of people are saying it's drug-related."

**Amber Tisdale,**  
senior



"It's a tragedy. It's sad that more bad attention is being given to Youngstown. It's real unfortunate."

**Jay Lowry,**  
sophomore



"It happened right down the street from where I live. It's kind of scary."

**Jessica Esposito,**  
sophomore



"I'm not surprised because shootings happen all the time. We live in Youngstown. It's not the first shooting I've heard about."

**Mike Chuey**  
sophomore



"We're supposed to have the safest campus ... but the surrounding area is horrible."

**Morley Sweet,**  
senior



"One of our friends was next to the guy who got shot. I'm still trying to figure out if any of my other friends were down there."

**Dairri Martin,**  
incoming student



"It's not going to deter me from going downtown. It's a shame that it will increase the bad image of downtown."

**Bob Scott,**  
graduate student



"It's crazy, all this violence and stuff that's going on. I'm from Youngstown. I already know what goes on. It is what it is. I feel the same as I did yesterday."

**Chris Leflore,**  
freshman



"I was shocked. I don't go out much. I stay low with school and stuff. I didn't go out yesterday. I had a funny feeling about it."

**Chuck Jennings,**  
freshman



"We didn't think a party would end up with a bunch of people getting shot and one guy dying. It's always like that in Youngstown."

**Justin Brown,**  
senior



"It's crazy. There's a cop outside of Kilcawley, so I still feel safe."

**Caitlin Kutzer,**  
junior



"I can't believe someone pulled out a gun near campus and shot someone. I still feel pretty safe."

**Kaitlin Morse,**  
senior

## VICTIMS LIST

**Durrell Richardson, 31, shot in left thigh**

**Jordon Wagner, 20, shot in shoulder/foot**

**Shavai Owens, 17, shot in right ear**

**Tejohn Lawrence, 19, shot in foot**

**Jaleesa Moore, 20, shot in arm/abdomen**

**Jamie Ruffin, 20, shot in pelvis**

**D'Anthony Brown, 17, shot in foot**

**Sean Griffin, 20, shot in foot**

**Lisette Encarnacion, 19, shot in buttocks**

**Ebony Michel, 20, shot in foot**

**Selina Howard, wrist abrasion**

# YSU Student Government Association responds to shooting

Patrick Donovan  
CONTRIBUTOR

As the Youngstown State University community grapples with the off-campus shooting that has left one student dead and six students wounded, YSU Student Government Association leaders are working to effectively respond to the incident.

"Today's tragedy was frustratingly senseless. This kind of needless violence is a loss for the victims, their families and the community. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims' families," said Gary Davenport, vice president of University Affairs.

Davenport and other SGA members received news about the shooting via the YSU Alert System early Sunday morning. Davenport said he wants to assure students that they have no reason to be afraid on campus.

"Campus is extremely safe, and when traveling elsewhere, the best way to remain

safe is to think ahead, ask questions and leave questionable situations. Do not be afraid to call the police," Davenport said.

Davenport said he has been in touch with leaders of some student organizations.

"There are a lot of ideas right now about how to respond to this. We'll be working with our police departments and campus administrators to decide on the most appropriate courses of action," Davenport said. "Right now, we're talking about a candlelight march through the neighborhood as soon as is reasonably possible."

SGA President Nick Meditz has encouraged any concerned students to attend the SGA meeting that will be held Monday in the Ohio Room of Kilcawley Center at 4 p.m.

"Student Government Association is open to any student for any reason, no matter what. My number one response is being available for the students of Youngstown State University," Meditz said.

EDITORIAL

# Never forgotten

In a tragic series of events, Jamail Johnson, a 25-year-old senior and fellow YSU student, was senselessly murdered. To some, Jamail was a brother, friend or classmate, or maybe all of the above.

We are all part of a small campus with a tightly woven student body. He was one of us.

While the specific details of Sunday morning are still being determined, one common thread has emerged. Jamail was attempting to play mediator in a sophomoric squabble.

Youngstown Mayor

Jay Williams said it best: "Any individual who has to come in and act like this, in my estimation, isn't fit to live in a civilized society with the rest of us."

Jamail embodied the spirit of Youngstown and the YSU community.

Also disheartening is the amount of negative attention this has drawn to Youngstown, a city that has worked tirelessly to clean up its violent stigma. Sadly, one night trumps the tens of thousands of nights where nothing of the sort transpired.

YSU RESPONSE PAGE 1

incident, but due to the early stages of the investigation, little was known for certain.

"They are a sanctioned fraternity and an approved student organization," Cole said. "They are in good standing."

Cole had some information about those involved, but names, ages and scholastic affiliation was unknown at that time.

"There was one YSU student that was killed. There were 11 other individuals that were wounded, including six YSU students," he said.

YSU Police immediately responded to the call and also stationed an officer at each residence hall to ensure safety of the student body. Police of-

icers met with campus resident assistants to brief them on the situation.

"YSU does have an exemplary record of campus safety," Anderson said. "It's one of the safest campuses in the state of Ohio. As you know, we are very interested in the safety of our students, so, as a precaution, YSU police presence has been increased."

There will be counseling available for those seeking help, and Cole acknowledged the possibility of a memorial service.

"This is one of those days that every university president across the country, as well as many other officials, always dreads," Anderson said.

POLICE RESPONSE PAGE 1

The only information being released about the suspects is that they are in their early 20s and so far have no prior records. Police said juvenile records may exist. Both suspects have been charged with one count of aggravated murder, one count of shooting into a habitat and 11 counts of felonious assault.

Hughes said the shooters were using semi-automatic handguns.

"We are holding back on the names of these individuals as long as we can to finish up the interview process and gather as much information as we possibly can," Hughes said.

Capt. Rod Foley of the Youngstown police said the party started between 2 and 2:30 a.m. He said the party resulted from people texting and Facebook posts. Around 40 to 50 people were in attendance.

Youngstown police have found no evidence to indicate that the shooting incident at the Love Lounge has any connection to the off-campus shooting.

According to the police, another fraternity held an event at the Metroplex in Liberty, where a fight occurred, but no evidence points to a connection with the Indiana Avenue incident.



**got an opinion?** Send letters to: [thejambar@gmail.com](mailto:thejambar@gmail.com)

# CKP

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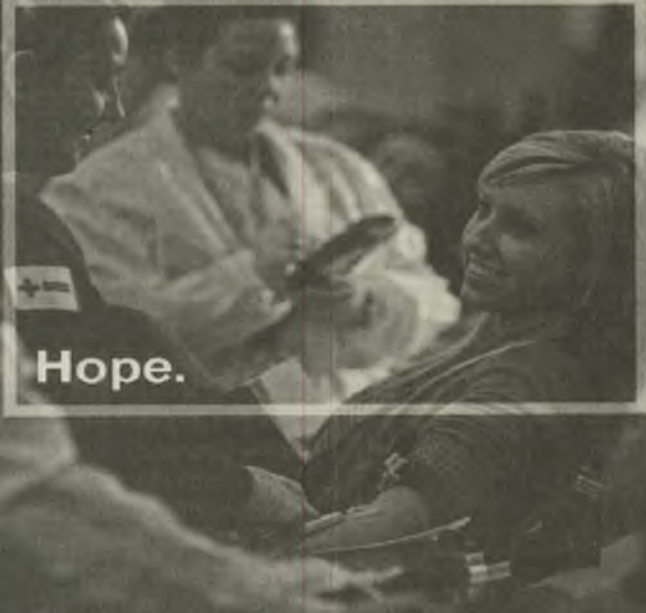
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# EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

## Students recount 'senseless' shooting that claims life of YSU student

Lamar Salter &  
Doug Livingston  
THE JAMBAR

When shots rang out at a North Side party early Sunday morning, Youngstown State University freshman Jordon Wagner fell to the ground 2 inches from fellow student Jamail Johnson. While Wagner escaped the house, which was filled with the smell of gunpowder smoke and riddled with bullets, Johnson did not.

"Once I get back up to my feet, all I see is this young man laying on his face, with smoke coming out of his body," Wagner said. "I don't even think he saw it coming."

Johnson was killed in the shooting, and 11 others, including Wagner and five more YSU students, were injured, according to a statement released by YSU.

Wagner had never seen a man killed. In the moments after Johnson fell in the doorway, a fleeing crowd of 35 to 40 people trampled Wagner. What he had hoped were merely warning shots had taken Johnson's life and left Wagner unknowingly bleeding.

"I didn't know I was shot till I got to the car," Wagner said.

Wagner exited the house through a back door, entering the bloodstained backyard where he lost his car keys.

Wagner waited in the cold with others, some YSU students.

YSU freshman DeShaun McDonald arrived at the party around 2:30 a.m. and described the atmosphere as calm and relaxed until a physical altercation ensued.

"A bunch of people just started pushing each other," McDonald said.

As the fight began to escalate, McDonald and his friend decided it was time to leave. But before they could leave, the shooter was pushed out of the house, only to immediately charge back in.



Shooting victim and YSU freshman Jordon Wagner holds up the bullet-riddled jacket that he said saved his life. Wagner was shot six times, with one bullet passing through his left shoulder and another shattering his right foot. Wagner is one of 12 victims in the Sunday morning shooting that took the life of YSU student Jamail Johnson. Photo by Doug Livingston/The Jambar.

That's when the gunshots started.

"As soon as we begin to move, all I hear, it's just like pow, pow, pow, pow, pow, like at least 12 or more times," McDonald said.

McDonald said he was patted down before entering the party, and he did not understand how the shooter was able to bring a gun.

As McDonald made his way to the exit, he and his friend ran into what they believe was the body of Johnson.

"We both end up looking down, and then we see the dude right there, and he is just laying there, just bleeding," McDonald said, adding that a crowd formed around the body. "They just wanted him to live."

Jared Buker, a YSU student and president of the Alpha Phi Delta fraternity had also attended the party and expressed his grief about the tragedy.

"This is such an unbelievable tragedy. Our hearts go out to the family and fraternity brothers," Buker said. "This is really a wake-up call for the entire Greek system to realize how much we need to stick together and to keep everyone safe."

Witnesses said the altercation began when a woman pushed a bystander, inciting a group of eight partygoers to retaliate. The woman left at the request of a friend but returned roughly 10 minutes later with increased numbers. "Everyone saw the gun,"

Wagner said.

A man wearing a red skullcap and a green jacket brandished the gun in the house. After being forced outside, Johnson went to the door to defuse the situation.

Johnson's efforts to maintain the peace cost him his life.

"It took a lot of bravery ... to break up a fight when a man got a gun," Wagner said of Johnson's last moments.

Two minutes after the man left the party, he turned to the doorway and fired at least a dozen shots into the house.

Wagner and others were taken from the scene to St. Elizabeth Health Center.

At St. Elizabeth Health Center, Eslyn Woodberry was texting Johnson. She had

become ominously sick to her stomach, a witness at the hospital said. That witness was Darlene Wagner, there to check on the condition of her son, Jordon Wagner.

Darlene Wagner told Woodberry that Johnson would not be responding to her texts. She told Woodberry that Johnson — a friend she had spoken with just an hour ago — had passed away.

Editor's note: Jared Buker is a staff member at The Jambar. His comments were necessary given his position as an eyewitness and president of APD. Darlene Wagner is a former staff member of The Jambar. Her comments were necessary due to her paternal relationship with the victim, Jordon Wagner.

## Family, friends remember Jamail Johnson

Joe Giesy  
NEWS EDITOR

Nearly a decade ago, Roger Gillum was a freshman on the Liberty High School football team getting tips and pointers from a hardworking senior, one who always seemed available to help or give advice.

On Sunday, Gillum woke up to a message on his iPhone that told him the same hardworking senior had been killed by gunfire during a confrontation at a party early that morning.

Jamail Johnson was described as personable, good-natured and always willing to help out by friends and family who were closest to him.

"The first thing I thought was, 'He'd be the type of kid that broke up a fight,'" John Young, Liberty principal, said of the former Liberty High School student-athlete.

Young said Johnson was the "nicest kid," quiet and involved in a lot of things.

"He was always around, there for everybody," he said.

Gillum said he and Johnson stayed friends after high school but lost touch for a couple of years before reconnecting two weeks ago during a chance encounter at a local grocery store.

"He always asked how school was going," he said.

Gillum, who graduated from YSU last year, said he and Johnson planned to meet up but never set a date.

Johnson's cousin, Brian Glenn, said he also made plans to meet up with him a couple weeks ago but had not really talked to or seen him since because the two were busy with school, work and other responsibilities.

Glenn unsuccessfully attempted to meet with him at the Indiana Avenue house party Saturday night before leaving for another party, then going home around 2:30 a.m. His ride did not feel like returning to the party.

"I could have easily been there," Glenn said. "I would've been right there with him."

Noah Taylor, a Kent State Univer-

sity student visiting Youngstown for the weekend, said Johnson texted him around 3:30 a.m. asking him to come out.

Taylor responded but never received a response back.

A friend told Taylor what happened at 4 a.m. and his only response was, "Stop playing around."

"It just doesn't seem real that this would happen to him," he said.

Taylor and Johnson worked together over winter break at Foot Locker in the Southern Park Mall where Taylor said everybody loved Johnson. He described him as a positive person who always brightened up the workplace.

"Jamail just wanted to better people," Taylor said.

Glenn said Johnson was always a generous person, and no one ever had to ask him for help because he would ask first.

"There's not a bad word anyone could ever say about him," he said.

Glenn said he was someone you could always look up to because of how he lived his life.

"He really loved and appreciated everyone he knew," he said.

Out of all the people, he was the one guy, Glenn said. "Why couldn't they all survive?"

Lillian Woodberry, said her daughter, Eslyn, and Johnson were classmates who went to a high school prom together and stayed close after graduation.

She said Eslyn is doing OK but was still feeling ill and too grief-stricken to speak at this time.

Woodberry said Johnson helped her daughter with some classes at YSU, and Eslyn had been trying to contact him over the weekend to let him know about a job interview she set up for him.

Johnson transferred to YSU from Ashland University in 2006 to be closer to home, according to a Jambar story from 2007. The Jambar story dealt with diversity initiatives on campus, and Johnson told the newspaper that he believed that YSU needed to work harder to increase its diversity.

## Local activist stills believes in neighborhood

Andrea DeMart  
NEWS EDITOR

There are some words of comfort for the residents of the North Side.

Phil Kidd, community organizer for the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative and Wick Park Neighborhood Association leader, said residents need to understand that this was most likely a targeted incident.

Kidd has lived on the North Side for about 10 years and said that the area has not had "too much instance

with crime, particularly with gun violence."

"There is a large presence of student housing, whether that is the dormitories or some of campus residential or in this instance, fraternity houses," he said. "It is a relatively quiet neighborhood ... and it has gotten a lot better over the last 10 years since I've been there."

After the incident, Kidd said he received calls from concerned residents and members from all over the community.

"I think when something of this na-

ture happens, you feel pretty helpless and you feel saddened, and it's obviously a very tragic situation," he said. "So you feel for the victims themselves despite the fact that perhaps, whether or not they were kind of put themselves in the situation or not, it's still a tragic situation."

Kidd said people need to let their emotions cool and sort out the facts of the situation.

"I think that people were concerned that this was a random act of violence initially, that maybe there was a fraternity party, there was a group

of students that were at a house and somebody came up to the house and opened gunfire with no reason at all," he said. "It doesn't appear, from what I'm hearing, that that was the case."

Kidd said the streets were full of cars on Sunday morning, as usual, with residents attending church services.

Kidd said although there has been some crime in the area, it is not enough to stop the growth of the neighborhood.

"I think that speaks to how people still view the neighborhood as far as its safety," he said.