

Two arrested in murder of All-American

Former student arraigned in connection with Hopkins' murder

By M. Ferguson Tinsley
NEWS EDITOR

A former YSU student will face felony charges in connection with the Sunday shooting death of YSU football standout Jermaine Hopkins.

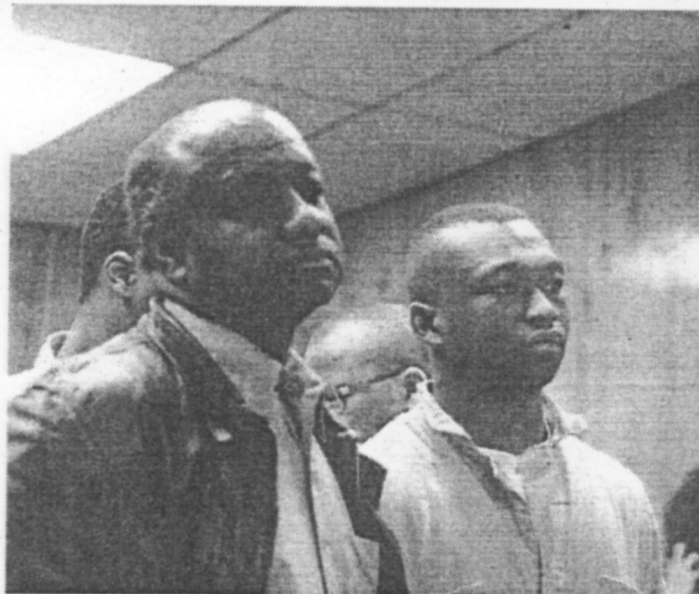
Hopkins, 22, was murdered outside his Park Avenue home around 1:30 a.m. after leaving a sorority party at the University. Police say he had tried to break up a fight at the party and was followed home by his attackers who shot him twice, once in the head and again in the wrist

Timothy Slocum, 22, of Youngstown, faces one count of complicity to commit aggravated murder and one count of complicity to attempted aggravated murder in connection with the killing. During his arraignment, Slocum told Judge Andrew Polivischak he was still attending YSU, however, University authorities say Slocum dropped out last fall.

Police also charged the alleged triggerman Eric Moore, 22, of Youngstown, with aggravated murder and attempted aggravated murder in the same incident.

The two were arraigned before Youngstown Municipal

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▲ (Left photo) Eric Moore's father, Leonard Hightower, looks on as his son is arraigned for the Hopkins' murder. (Right) The other man accused, former YSU student Timothy Slocum.

University grieves second murder in past two weeks



At 2 a.m. Sunday YSU Head Football Coach Jim Tressel answered his phone to the news of the death of Jermaine Hopkins. "It was like a nightmare had taken over my thoughts. You just don't know [when you answer the phone] that your in for devastation," said Tressel, executive director of intercollegiate athletics.

Tressel spoke of Jermaine Hopkins as a pleasant, always smiling, nice, ordinary individual and that is how he will be remembered. The Penguin room was silent as thoughts of Hopkins filled the room. Tressel took his seat in

front of the press to answer questions regarding one of the "most cordial players to ever play football for the Penguins."

Tressel said this was the first in YSU's history of a player dying violently and the second shooting death in a week's time of a YSU student. Education major Sean Kessler, 22, was found last weekend dead of gun shot wounds in Mill Creek Park.

"It's a scary world today, things snowball quickly. When I was growing up fist-fights were common, now there is too much gun-fire," said Tressel. According to city police, Hopkins' murder raises the death count to six for the beginning of this year.

Police said 21-year-old Jermaine Hopkins, YSU's All-American defensive lineman,

may have been the victim of a vengeful flare-up when he was shot to death early Sunday morning outside his Park Avenue home.

Eric Moore, 22, of Stiles Avenue and YSU sophomore Timothy Slocum, 22, of Lansdowne Boulevard, both in Youngstown, were to be arraigned Monday in Youngstown Municipal Court.

Moore was charged with one count of aggravated murder and one count attempted aggravated murder. Slocum was charged with one count of complicity to commit aggravated murder and complicity to attempted aggravated murder. Both are first degree felonies.

Sgt. George Hammar said that on Saturday night Hopkins

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Arraignment

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Judge Andrew Polivischak Jr. Monday morning. Both waived their right to enter "not guilty" pleas. Polivischak set bond for Moore at \$100,000 and \$50,000, respectively, with no 10 percent surety bail. Slocum's bond was set at \$75,000 and \$35,000 with no surety. A preliminary hearing will be held Feb. 6 in Polivischak's court.

Polivischak said, if convicted, both could face life in prison or execution.

Dressed in orange, county jail overalls, Slocum and Moore were brought to court in handcuffs. Both claimed need and requested court appointed counsel.

Meanwhile, Youngstown assistant prosecutor Dionne Almasy asked that the court determine the hefty bond for Moore based on his extensive criminal record, including a carrying a concealed weapons charge.

Monday afternoon Youngstown Police Detective Sgt. Jose Morales said ballistics tests are being conducted to determine the kind of gun used in the shooting. No weapon was found at the scene, he said.

Morales said Hopkins' death is the sixth this year.

"It's too bad. I really hate to see these kinds of cases," he said.



▲ Hopkins (58) defended YSU's home field against invading offenses.

Murder

and Slocum both had attended a Zeta Phi Beta dance that had deteriorated into a fight after someone bumped another partygoer. Hopkins tried to intervene, but police arrived and shut down the party, sending everyone home.

Apparently, Hammer said, someone followed Hopkins to his Park Avenue home after the incident and shot him in the head.

According to police reports, another Penguins' All-American Leon Jones said that he and Hopkins were among many Penguin football players who were at the party. After the incident, Jones said that two of the players had commented that there would be shooting.

Shortly after, Jones said that he, Hopkins and several others had left the Pub and went home to 107 Park. Moore, Slocum, one of the YSU players and some other unidentified subjects exited the car. Moore allegedly then

fired once at Jones and then at Hopkins, shooting him in the head and wrist. Then Moore, Slocum and the others re-entered the car and fled.

Jones said he and the other players immediately took Hopkins to the hospital where he later died from his injuries.

YSU President Leslie Cochran issued a statement on Sunday, stating how troubling it was that young people continue to resort to violence when attempting to resolve conflict.

Cochran said, "Our society must find ways to stem the flow of violence that often interrupts and tragically ends the aspirations and promise of so many of our youth. YSU mourns the loss of Jermaine and asks that we all remember his commitment and dedication to his teammates and our community."

Police say Hopkins' family

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returned his body to Miami early Monday. Tressel said the family will be invited to YSU next week to "make sure they [Hopkins' family] knows how we [athletic department] feel."

YSU football coaches held a prayer meeting to help team members cope with the loss of a teammate. Bassam Deeb, executive director of Student Life, is working with Zeta Phi Beta sorority and all YSU students to provide counseling and support services to those who need it.

Last night YSU basketball squads wore black shoulder straps on their uniforms to serve as memorial to Hopkins. YSU head basketball coach Dan Peters said, "This is a tragedy that hits everyone from the athletics department, to University personnel to the surrounding communities," he said.

(Report written by: Kim Mitchell, Monessa Ferguson Tinsley, Rochelle Durban, Stephanie Ujhelyi)