



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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## **Akron Man Sentenced to 35 – 40.5 Years in Prison in Connection with Murder of Pregnant Woman**

AKRON, Ohio (Wednesday, July 19, 2023) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Alison McCarty sentenced Zyeir Saunders, 22, of Fredrick Boulevard in Akron, to 35-to-40.5 years in prison in connection with the murder of 21-year-old Teyaurra Harris in April of 2022.

On Friday, July 7, 2023, Saunders pled guilty to the following charges:

- Involuntary Manslaughter with a Gun Specification – a Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree
- Four Counts of Felonious Assault with Gun Specifications – Felonies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

In the evening of April 14, 2022, Zyeir Saunders, 17-year-old Antonil Whitaker, 19-year-old Darrion Rackley, and 21-year-old Jeremiah Williams parked on Rockaway Street in Akron, just up from where 19-year-old Jaunte Smith, 21-year-old Jaevaiaire Small, and 18-year-old Ni'Kayla Johnson were hanging out. 21-year-old Teyaurra Harris was a passenger in a car which pulled up in between the two groups.

As the driver of the vehicle Harris was in stuck his head out the window, Saunders and Whitaker started shooting. Ni'Kayla Johnson was struck twice in the leg.

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Thinking the shots were coming from the vehicle with Teyaurra Harris, Small starts shooting. Harris, who was six-weeks pregnant at the time, was struck in the head and died.

Following a hearing in Juvenile Court, Antonil Whitaker was bound over to the Summit County Court of Common Pleas. On July 10, 2023, Whitaker pled guilty to the following charges:

- Involuntary Manslaughter with a Gun Specification – a Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree
- Two Counts of Felonious Assault with Gun Specifications – Felonies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Whitaker's sentencing date has yet to be scheduled.

On January 25, 2023, Jeremiah Williams pled guilty to the following charges:

- Involuntary Manslaughter with a Gun Specification – a Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree
- Two Counts of Felonious Assault with Gun Specifications – Felonies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Williams' sentencing date has yet to be scheduled.

Jaunte Smith's trial is scheduled for August 14, 2023.

Smith is charged with:

- Two Counts of Felonious Assault with Gun Specifications – Felonies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree
- Carrying a Concealed Weapon – a Felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree
- Improperly Handling Firearms in a Motor Vehicle – a Felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

Darrion Rackley is scheduled to go on trial August 21, 2023.

Rackley is charged with:

- Murder with a Gun Specification – a Special Felony
- Six Counts of Felonious Assault with Gun Specifications – Felonies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree
- Discharge of a Firearm on or Near Prohibited Premises with a Gun Specification – a Felony of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree

On June 20, 2023, Jaeviaire Small was sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to the following charges:

- Aggravated Assault with a Gun Specification – a Felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree
- Having a Weapon Under Disability – a Felony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree
- Carrying a Concealed Weapon – a Felony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree