



# Elliot Kolkovich

---

## Summit County Prosecutor

### **For Immediate Release**

Thursday, March 27, 2025

CONTACT: [Elaine Vilem](#)

(330) 643-8386

## **PROSECUTOR KOLKOVICH ANNOUNCES AT LEAST 18 YEARS FOR DEATH OF ACCOMPLICE IN SKATE PARK SHOOTING**

AKRON, OH – Today, Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich has announced that Julian Fort, 26, was sentenced to 18 to 23.5 years in prison for the 2022 shooting of Zion Neal at the Derby Downs skate park. Neal was also designated as a Violent Offender, meaning that upon his release from prison he will have to register in the Violent Offender Database for 10 years.

Fort was found guilty after submitting an Alford plea – meaning despite the plea, he is not admitting guilt – to the following charges:

- One count of Voluntary Manslaughter with a three-year Firearm Specification – a 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Felony;
- One count of Obstructing Justice – a 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Felony; and
- One count of Tampering with Evidence – a 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Felony.

**“Gun violence continues to devastate our communities, and we must remain committed to holding those who engage in violent crimes accountable,”** said Prosecutor Kolkovich. **“I also want to extend my gratitude to the Akron Police Department for their diligent investigative efforts and the swift apprehension of the offenders.”**

In December of 2022, Fort, Hendrix-Vest, and Neal set up a robbery of four men in the parking lot outside of Derby Downs and the Akron Skate Park. After brandishing firearms and pointing them at the men they set up, one of the intended robbery victims pulled out his own gun and shot Neal in self-defense. Under Ohio law, the perpetrators of a felony are liable for the death of an accomplice that occurs while committing the crime.

Co-defendant Nathan Hendrix-Vest, 25, also pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and obstructing justice in February 2024 for his role in the offense. He is scheduled to be sentenced on March 31, 2025, at 11 a.m. by Summit County Court of Common Pleas Judge Joy Malek Oldfield. It is expected that he will receive a 10-year prison term at that time.

###