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## Victim in Far East Side homicide identified as 25-year-old Madison man

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CHRIS AADLAND, STATE JOURNAL

A memorial at the scene of the shooting of Jameel Easter, Saturday's Far East Side homicide victim.

The victim in Saturday's Far East Side shooting was identified as Madison resident Jameel Easter, the Dane County Medical examiner said Sunday.

Easter, 25, was shot Saturday at about 3:30 a.m. in a parking lot in the 900 block of Vernon Avenue, Police Chief Mike Koval said.

Easter died of gunshot wounds, a preliminary autopsy showed.

The shooting was Madison's fourth homicide of the year.

In a Facebook post Sunday morning, Michael Johnson, president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, said Easter had a newborn child. He said the mother of the child was a youth development professional at the club.

"This recent shooting has impacted one of my colleagues at (the) Boys and Girls Club and almost every single shooting in this city over the last two years has had an impact on one of our Club members, colleagues or volunteers," he said in the post.

Witnesses told police that a man in his 20s came out from between two buildings and opened fire, Koval said. Semi-automatic shell casings were found at the scene, along with damage to several vehicles and an apartment door.

The shooter fled the scene, but witnesses could not say whether he was on foot or in a vehicle, Koval said Saturday.

Koval said evidence suggested Easter was targeted.

Investigators found blood, but the victim was not at the scene, Koval said. Three people nearby took the victim from his vehicle and drove him to a local hospital, where he died from his wounds.

Koval said the three people are not considered persons of interest in the case.

At an impromptu vigil for Easter on Saturday night at the scene of the shooting, shots were fired, but as of Sunday morning, no injuries had been reported, police said.

A vehicle approached and several shots were fired. Police located shell casings in the street very close to where the group had congregated.

'We got you!'

At the scene of the shooting, a makeshift memorial for Easter was constructed on a utility pole, surrounded by candles and decorated with balloons, pictures and messages like “we love you Meel” and “we will protect [and] take care of your children. We got you!”

While the number of homicides this year is on a similar pace as last year, Koval said the number of shots-fired calls has increased.

Community and city support, and programs for at-risk youth, are vital to reducing violence, he said.

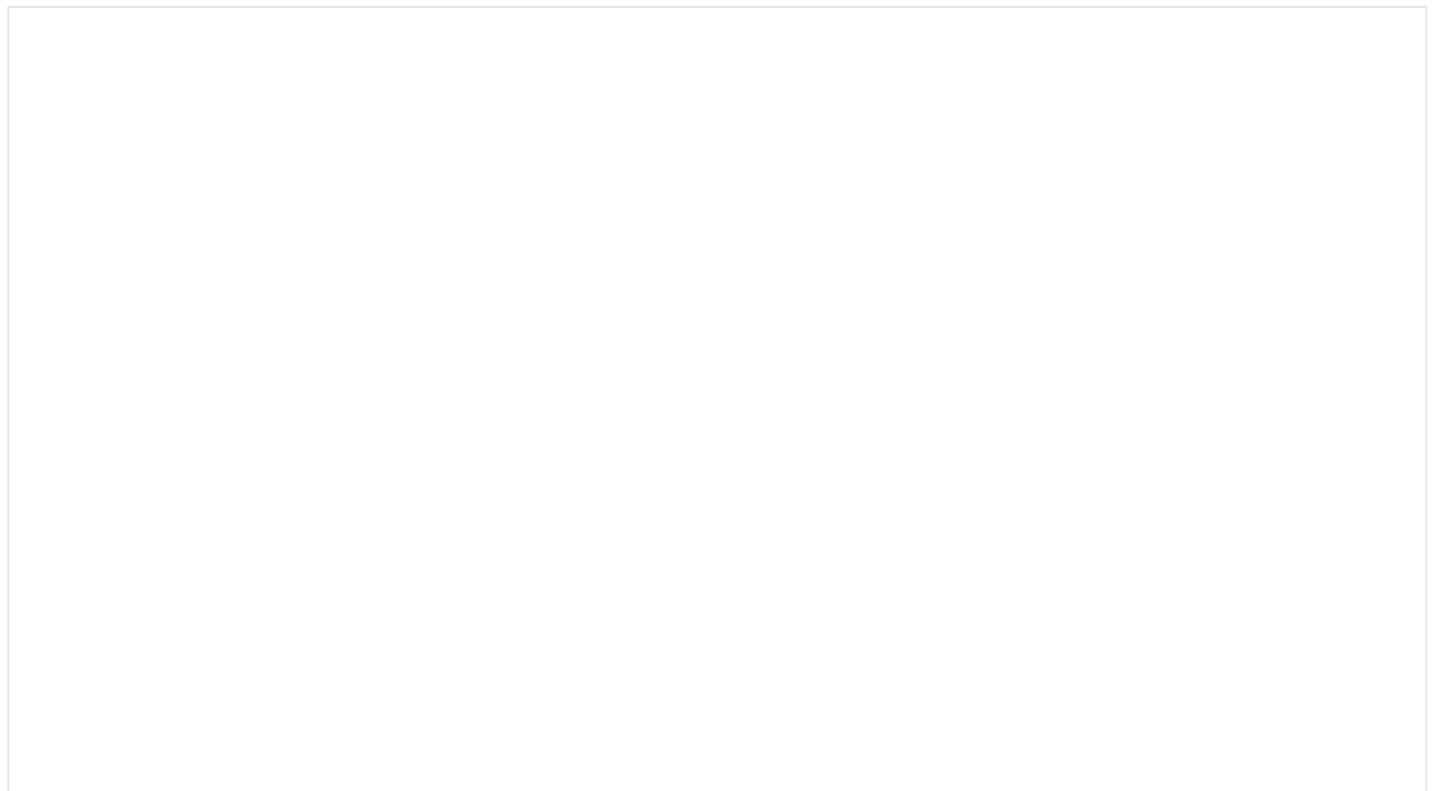
Ald. Amanda Hall, who represents the 3rd District, where the shooting took place, said a lack of community involvement could be hindering the investigation.

“One of the things that’s holding back the investigation right now is that folks don’t trust the system,” Hall said Saturday. “They fear that if they provide information that leads to someone being brought up on charges that they will personally suffer retribution, and I think that that’s tragic.”

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*State Journal reporter Shelley K. Mesch contributed to this report.*

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