

Judge says she needs more time to decide whether to lower bail for Alderwood Mall shooting suspect

Posted: September 4, 2024 – My Edmonds News



From left, prosecuting attorney Elise Deschenes and defense attorney Bryan Hershman discuss restricting the media from being able to record the hearing. Suspect Samuel Gizaw is at far right. (Photo by Rick Sinnett)

During a hearing in Snohomish County Superior Court Wednesday, Judge Anna Alexander said she needs more time to consider a defense request to reduce bail for 16-year-old Samuel Gizaw, who has been charged as an adult in the [July 3 Alderwood Mall shooting](#) that killed 13-year-old Jayda Woods-Johnson of Brier.

The 3 p.m. hearing didn't get underway until almost 4 p.m. Gizaw's attorney, Bryan Hershman, argued that images of his client in his jail uniform would unfairly show him in a negative light.

However, Prosecuting Attorney Elise Deschenes and media members present said that images of the suspect had been published in the press before he was identified and during his arraignment hearing.



Judge Anna Alexander presided over Samuel Gizaw's Sept. 4 bail reduction hearing.

Judge Alexander agreed that Gizaw, an Edmonds resident, may appear in court in his civilian clothes at future court dates. However, she said there was not enough notification to ban images of the defendant during the Sept. 4 bail hearing.

Gizaw's lawyer sought to reduce the suspect's bail from \$2 million to \$780,000 and proposed a property bond, in which property of equivalent value to the bail bond is given in collateral. In this case, the property is the home belonging to Gizaw's parents, which, according to Hershman, has its mortgage paid off and is valued at about \$1 million.

Deschenes argued that a property bond places an additional burden on the courts. The court would need to put a lien on the property and sell it to collect the bail owed.



Jayda Woods-Johnson's father Jeremy Johnson wears a red memorial shirt for his daughter. (Photo by Rick Sinnett)

Gizaw's defense said that his client would not place his family in a position where they could lose their home and added that he would be monitored 24 hours a day. Further, several character witnesses testifying Wednesday said that Gizaw was a respectful person.

Hershman said that a group of teens assaulted Gizaw, and he was acting in self-defense, saying that "it was an ambush."

The prosecution countered that Gizaw's reaction to being punched was to fire a gun into a group of people. Further, although character witnesses claim he is an outstanding citizen, his school's resource officer reports the opposite, saying that Gizaw was disrespectful and liked to fight, Deschenes said.

The prosecution provided the judge with several pieces of social media for consideration, including several photos of Gizaw making hand signs with guns. Two guns had extended clips, which the prosecution noted are illegal to own. One photo showed the defendant making hand signs while next to a small child watching cartoons.



The victim's mother, Tabatha Johnson, reads a prepared statement for the court.

In a prepared speech delivered to the judge, Jayda Woods-Johnson's mother Tabatha Johnson said, "Jayda would have started eighth grade today, but instead, she will always be a seventh grader."

The hearing ended in recess as the court building closed for the day.

— *Story and photos by Rick Sinnett*