

# Cardell Hayes trial slated for Sept. 18

BY LEAH CLARK  
Staff writer

The man who fatally shot former Saints player Will Smith and injured his wife seven years ago will go to trial this fall, a judge decided Monday, marking the latest delay in a series of failed trial dates over the past year.

Cardell Hayes, 35, is charged in the April 2016 shooting death of Smith in the Lower Garden District. He is also accused of shooting Smith's wife, Racquel.

Hayes' trial has been rescheduled at least four times, the result of a lack of jurors, pandemic-related pauses, Hurricane Ida and a rare

motion by prosecutors to change the trial's location.

On Monday, Orleans Parish Criminal District Court Judge Camille Buras set Hayes' trial for Sept. 18.

"This is going to be a date that is set and done, barring hospitalization," Buras said.

This trial will be Hayes' second in connection with Smith's death. In December 2016, Hayes was convicted of manslaughter and attempted manslaughter by a 10-2 jury vote. Hayes was serving a 25-year sentence when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that nonunanimous jury verdicts were unconstitutional, allowing many, including Hayes, the chance for new trials.

At the time, Oregon and Louisiana were the only states to allow split verdicts.

On Monday, Buras told defense attorneys and prosecutors that she would be open to arguments for a sequestered jury. Jurors had been sequestered for a week during Hayes' first trial.

However, John Fuller, one of Hayes' defense attorneys, said he does not intend to seek sequestration.

"It's an inconvenience on the jurors to keep them from their families," Fuller said. "At this point, the case is pretty well-known, and I don't know what sequestering will accomplish in terms of eliminating

influence."

According to New Orleans police and prosecutors, Hayes and Smith, 34, were involved in a fender bender April 9, 2016. Moments later, then-28-year-old Hayes allegedly hit Smith's vehicle again, and the two men argued. The argument ended when Hayes allegedly shot Smith seven times in the back and once in the side, killing the former defensive end for the New Orleans Saints. Smith's wife was also shot in the leg.

Hayes has pleaded not guilty, saying Smith had a weapon and that he fired in self-defense. His claim could not be backed up by witnesses during his first trial.

## Shooting victim is S&WB staffer, agency confirms

BY MISSY WILKINSON  
Staff writer

A driver shot multiple times by assailants who lay in wait as he exited the Interstate 610 at Franklin Avenue on Friday is a Sewerage & Water Board employee, the agency confirmed Monday.

The shooters remain at large, and the investigation is ongoing, police said.

"We appreciate NOPD's diligence on this case," said S&WB spokesperson Grace Birch.

Police responded to the shooting about 5:51 a.m. They say assailants in a white Hyundai Sonata with no license plates were at the bottom of the Franklin Avenue exit ramp when the S&WB employee exited I-610 West onto a surface street. The occupants inside the Sonata opened fire on the victim, striking him in the body multiple times. They then fled.

Emergency Medical Services took the victim to the hospital, police said. His condition is unknown.

Police did not describe the vehicle that was fired upon because to do so could indirectly identify the victim of a violent crime, they said. But a S&WB source familiar with the investigation said the victim was driving one of the agency's utility vehicles at the time of the attack.

The shooting comes roughly a year and a half after another S&WB employee was fatally shot in the same area, allegedly by Damon Rideau, a coworker with whom he had feuded. That fatal shooting occurred in the 3500 block of Franklin Avenue near Sage Street. Rideau was arrested at the scene for second-degree murder and is being held on a \$175,000 bail as he awaits a pre-trial conference March 31.

Police have released no information that would suggest the shootings are related. They asked anyone with information to contact Third District detectives at (504) 658-6030 or Crimestoppers anonymously at (504) 822-1111.

## Jefferson Parish hosting free gardening seminar Tuesday

BY BLAKE PATERSON  
Staff writer

What are the best plants for soaking up rainwater? Which herbicides are safest for the environment? And how can everyday gardeners help combat flooding?

Those questions and others will be answered Tuesday at a free seminar on stormwater management and urban gardening hosted by Jefferson Parish government.

The event comes on the heels of a recent report that recommended Jefferson Parish do more to incorporate "green infrastructure" into its public works projects, code enforcement and private development to help tackle the more intense rainfall caused by climate change.

"We had 80 inches of rain last year in Jefferson Parish," said Sami Khalil of the parish's Department of Environmental Affairs. "We need the type of plants

that drink up water."

From rain barrels and detention ponds to rooftop gardens and catch basins, green infrastructure refers to a range of tools that retain and absorb runoff in order to lessen the load on traditional drainage systems.

Tuesday's seminar will feature presentations from a half-dozen experts from the LSU Agriculture Center, parish government and other environmental advocacy groups. The parish plans to give out free Cardinal flowers — one per person — on a first-come, first-serve basis, Khalil said.

The seminar is from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the Joseph S. Yenni Building's 2nd Floor Council Chambers at 1221 Elmwood Park Blvd. It will be livestreamed at [www.jeffparish.tv/live](http://www.jeffparish.tv/live).

Email Blake Paterson at [bpateron@theadvocate.com](mailto:bpateron@theadvocate.com), and follow him on Twitter, @blakepater.

## LIGHT

Continued from page 1B

more than \$20 million annually for the bridge, was officially justified as a means to pay off construction loans. It had always been scheduled to lapse in 2012. But a coalition of business interests pushed for its renewal on a ballot measure, noting that it was an important source of funding for other expenses — including lighting, a \$600,000 annual maintenance expense, with just a fraction of that

going to the decorative display.

But toll critics pointed to a history of waste and other wayward spending of toll revenue. The Bureau of Governmental Research found that 16 cents of every toll dollar went to the expense of toll collecting. Still, the renewal passed by three dozen votes out of more than 300,000 cast.

The result withstood a recount. But it didn't get past a Baton Rouge judge who found that provisional ballots disenfranchised west bank voters by excluding the toll referendum. The judge ordered a second vote, and the toll renewal

was trounced in the 2013 do-over: nearly 80% voted against it.

Though the toll was eliminated, there was enough unspent from prior collections for the DOTD to continue to maintain the decaying lighting system. Then came Hurricane Ida, which "dealt the final blow," Gitlin said.

"After the hurricane, when a bulb would go out and they would try and replace it, the bulb would short out right away," Gitlin said. "They stopped trying to replace bulbs and realized the entire electrical system was compromised." A new, programmable LED sys-

tem will provide "a much more efficient way to do the same job, and the upkeep is much easier," Gitlin said.

And this time around, the DOTD won't have to cover maintenance. New Orleans & Co., a private tourism marketing organization, had agreed to shoulder that cost, according to Kelly Schulz, the group's spokesperson.

"The project is in the early stages and specific details are still being worked out," Schulz said.

Email Ben Myers at [bmyers@theadvocate.com](mailto:bmyers@theadvocate.com).

## SMILEY

Continued from page 1B

"One of these is 'cutlery.' Folks insist on using 'silverware,' which is an expensive special subset of cutlery. I suspect it came from immigrants learning English while working as domestic servants in big houses.

"Also lost is 'score,' as in the expected life of 3 score and 10 years."

Martin says "hundredweight," which means 112 pounds in England but 100 pounds in the U.S., is also never heard.

"But maybe this is just another difference between British English and American English. Your readers will know, I am sure."

He also found a problem with "dozen:"

"Go into any McDonald's and ask for a dozen Chicken McNuggets and they ask for an explanation. A baker's dozen, 13 or 14 objects, is beyond them."

I suspect this is not an American language thing, but is rather due to McDonald's ordering options. Chicken McNuggets can be ordered in quantities of 4, 6, 10, 20 and 40. So asking for a dozen, or a baker's dozen, would indeed cause the "McServer" to pause.

### Special People Dept.

■ Paula Dauphin, of Baton Rouge, celebrates her 104th birthday Tuesday. Known as "Everyone's Aunt Paula," she is a native of New Orleans and a world traveler. She says her secrets to longevity are Community Coffee and Chicory and Hershey's Kisses (aka "Silver Bells").

■ Louise Morrow, of Crowley, celebrates her 94th birthday Tuesday.

### Thought for the Day

From Marsha R., of Baton Rouge: "Pessimists see the glass half empty. Optimists are already

opening another bottle."

### Spell check malfunction

Another in our series of groaners, this one from Jackie Carnes: "A priest, a minister and a rabbit walk into a bar and the bartender asks, 'What's going on here?'"

"The rabbit answers, 'I don't know about the other two, but I'm a typo.'"

Write Smiley at [Smiley@theadvocate.com](mailto:Smiley@theadvocate.com). He can also be reached by mail at P.O. Box 588, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. Follow Smiley Anders on Twitter, @SmileyAndersAdv.

## FOUND

Continued from page 1B

Office investigators say Sumera and Eymard had driven to a house in the 2600 block of Bay Adams Drive in Marrero to deliver heroin.

But someone shot the couple as they sat inside the vehicle, authorities said. Detectives later identified Harris as a suspect in the case.

Sumera's mother, Rhonda Bowles, has said that he and Harris were friends.

"My son knew him, but he still shot him in the back of the head. That man's a coward in my book," Bowles said in the weeks after the shootings.

The U.S. Marshals Service, working with the Sheriff's Office, learned that Harris was in Memphis and had been seen frequenting a bus terminal there, authorities said.

Marshals searched the area and spotted Harris walking out of a gas station on Feb. 16. He was taken into custody.

Harris was being held at the Jefferson Parish Correctional Center in Gretna on Monday. There is no bail set on the murder counts. A judge set bail at \$63,775 for the gun count and six outstanding traffic attachments.

## BROTHERS

Continued from page 1B

said, shaking her head and fighting back tears.

A suspect, 41-year-old Mario Andre Scott, was arrested later Saturday in Jefferson Parish. He was booked into the St. Tammany Parish Jail on Sunday on two counts of first-degree murder and a one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Bail has not yet been set.

The fatal shootings were Slidell's first homicides of 2023.

St. Tammany Parish Coroner Charles Preston said Saturday that both men suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

Jones had erected a small makeshift memorial at the driveway where police say Kerry Doucette was shot — he died at the scene. His brother, who was shot nearby, died later at a hospital, authorities said.

Several neighbors and friends had gathered at the driveway Monday morning to grieve and talk about the double homicide that they say has shaken the close-knit neighborhood.

Neighbors said bullets struck nearby houses as well as the Doucette brothers.

Slidell police said the shootings occurred after an earlier run-in between Louis Doucette, the father of the two brothers, and Scott. Police have not discussed details of that run-in.

Jones said that according to talk among neighbors, Louis Doucette had been walking along Terrace Avenue to go to a store when he saw Scott and said hello to him, only to have Scott react negatively and exchange words with the older man.

His sons had gone to talk to Scott, the neighbors said, an encounter that ended in fatal gunfire. Slidell police spokesperson Daniel Seuzeneau said there is no evidence that either of the Doucettes had weapons of any kind.

Tamarion Powell, who said his mother was friends with the brothers, described Kerry Doucette as quiet and "more of an observer," who was unlikely to have gotten into an argument with someone.

Miguel Doucette did work for trucking companies and installed pipe, Jones said, and Kerry Doucette had been working at Michoud for the past three years, installing pipe and doing roofing work.

Efforts to contact Doucette family members on Monday were not successful.

According to St. Tammany court records, Scott pleaded guilty to aggravated assault and second-degree battery in November 2011 and was sentenced to probation, but his probation was revoked on Nov. 21, 2017, and he was ordered to serve 90 days for the first count and two years for the second.

## LOTTERY

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023

PICK 3: 6-7-1

PICK 4: 4-4-1-9

PICK 5: 5-4-6-2-3

Unofficial notification, keep your tickets.