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NEWS

‘I was robbed’: Mother of teen slain in Bath mass shooting seeks justice for her son from Airbnb, homeowner

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Elijah Wells, 18, and his mother Alicia Wells pose for a picture. Elijah was killed during a mass shooting at an Airbnb party in Bath Township. His mother is calling for the shooters, the property owner and Airbnb to be held accountable. Provided by Peter Pattakos



By [Lucas Daprile, cleveland.com](#)

CLEVELAND, Ohio — The mother of a teen killed during a mass shooting at an Airbnb party in Bath Township said she wants the property owner and the rental platform to be held accountable for his death.

Just after midnight on Sunday, police say several people opened fire at a home on Top of the Hill Drive, wounding seven people and killing one: [Elijah Wells, 18, of Akron](#).

Wells, who died early Thursday morning, had been shot eight times while walking to the party, his mother, Alicia Wells, said. In the wake of the shooting, Alicia Wells has hired attorney Peter Pattakos, and she is calling for the property owner, Airbnb and the shooters to be held accountable.

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“My heart is aching,” Alicia Wells said. “Elijah was our everything. I don’t know what we’re going to do, but I want the people responsible to pay.

“I was robbed.”

As of Thursday morning, all but two of the surviving victims had been released from the hospital, Bath Township Police Chief Vito Sinopoli said in a statement.

Police have yet to make any arrests or publicly identify suspects. Investigators believe there were multiple shooters because police on scene discovered four different casings from rifle and handgun bullets in the driveway of the house.

Earlier this week, the Youth Peace & Justice Foundation, [founded in the wake of the Uvalde massacre](#) in 2022, announced it would offer up to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest of the shooters.

Bath Township is one of several municipalities that ban or restrict short-term rentals. Despite the ban, police say the \$1.2 million house was available for rent on the platform, and the party was advertised on social media.

“This is exactly what laws were meant to prevent,” Pattakos said.

Following the shooting, Bath Township’s trustees have called for residents to report homeowners who are violating zoning ordinances by offer their homes as short-term rentals.

Police do not have authority to enforce criminal penalties against those who break zoning law by allowing short-term rentals, Sinopoli said. Rather, those with complaints need to contact the township’s zoning department.

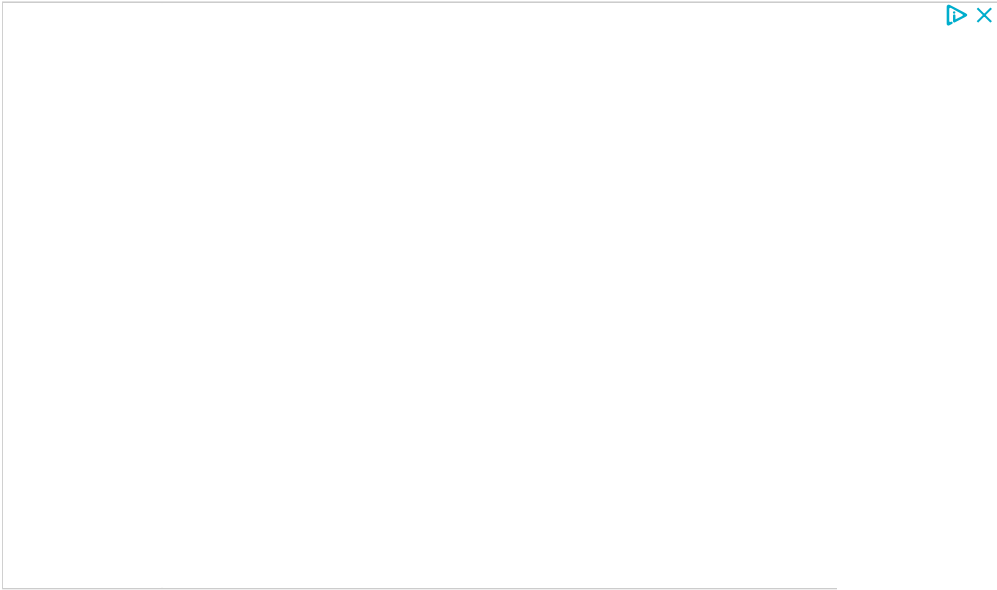
The property is owned by Shauna Gardner, who received the house from her husband Michael Jones before he was sentenced to prison for six years over a mail fraud and wire fraud conspiracy.

Gardner could not be reached for comment. However, Sinopoli said police have been in touch with her and she has been “cooperating fully” with the investigation.

Cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer reached out to an Airbnb official for comment.

Elijah Wells’ mother said her son had never been in trouble with the law. Rather, he liked sports, music and video games, she said.

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“He’s a homebody. He stays home and plays his game. He don’t run in the streets. He’s never been in trouble with the law. Never. My son is a good child,” Alicia Wells said.

During a Facebook live stream early Wednesday morning, Wells said her son’s condition had taken a turn for the worse.

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“They had to force air down his lungs,” Alicia Wells said. “He’s on life support. The machine is breathing for him.”

On Monday, when Elijah’s family members paid a visit, he was able to make small movements, cry and squeeze his mother’s hand.

“Now today, there’s no signs of life in my son,” Alicia Wells said early Wednesday.

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This is only one of many times a party at a local Airbnb has ended with gunfire or a police response. In 2017 in Bath, an Airbnb party ended with a person shot in the leg. Other cities, such as Parma, Seven Hills and Cleveland, have also seen [Airbnb parties end in a heavy police response](#).

“It’s a known issue, this trend of mansion parties in short-term rentals and violent criminal conduct or harmful criminal conduct happening at these parties,” Pattakos said. “For Airbnb and similar platforms like that to not take action, it goes to their liability.”

Investigators have asked anyone who attended the party, has video of it, or has information about the suspects to contact the tip line at intel@ohioattorneygeneral.gov or 855-224-6446.



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