

Hamilton

## Hamilton man gets 13 months in jail for obstructing justice in Yosif Al-Hasnawi case



[Samantha Craggs](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 30, 2018 5:44 PM ET | Last Updated: October 30, 2018



Yosif Al-Hasnawi, 19, was shot and killed in Hamilton last December. (Al-Mostafa Islamic Centre)

A Hamilton man who texted a friend to warn him that police were coming after him in connection with the shooting death of Yosif Al-Hasnawi was sentenced to 13 months in jail Tuesday.

James Matheson, 21, of Hamilton, pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice for his role in the

incident last December, where the 19-year-old Al-Hasnawi was fatally shot near a lower-city mosque.

Al-Hasnawi had gone to the aid of a man he saw being accosted by Matheson and a second man, who is charged with second-degree murder.

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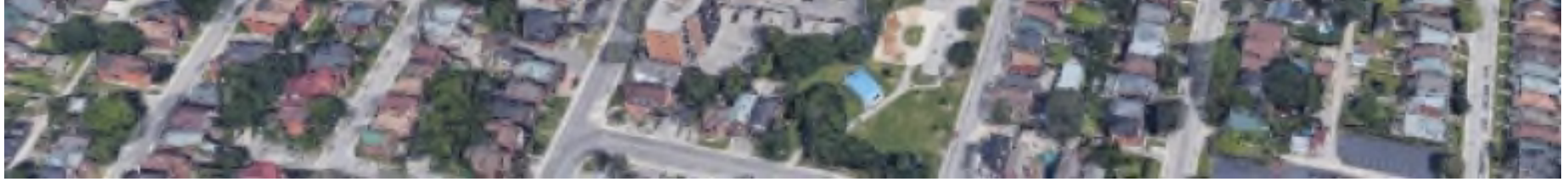
Matheson was sentenced to 389 days in jail, although with credit for nine months he spent in pre-trial custody, he's out on probation now.

The move was a plea deal in connection with the murder of the 19-year-old pre-med student that dates back to Dec. 2, 2017.

The case also generated controversy at the time after allegations paramedics tending to the wounded teen did not properly treat him and minimized his injuries.

According to an agreed statement of facts presented in Hamilton court Tuesday regarding Matheson's role, Matheson and a friend were drinking and taking meth. They left Matheson's Grant Avenue South apartment around 8:45 p.m., the court heard. The friend had a .22 caliber handgun tucked into his pants.





1. James Matheson's Grant Avenue apartment. 2. Cadillac Jax Bar and Grill across from the Al-Moustafa Islamic Centre. 3. The convenience store parking lot near where Al-Hasnawi was shot. (Google Maps)

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Near Cadillac Jax Bar and Grill, they saw an older man who looked drunk. Matheson started "mocking the man by yelling at him."

The statement said that Al-Hasnawi was outside the Al-Moustafa Islamic Centre with his younger brother and two friends. He called out for them to stop harassing the man.

The pair crossed the street and "a brief altercation turned physical," the court heard. Al-Hasnawi asked if they were going to "jump" the man, and the friend flashed his gun. Matheson sucker-punched Al-Hasnawi in the head, making him stagger off balance. He hit him a couple more times and the pair turned and ran.

Al-Hasnawi ran after them, the court heard. He caught up with them in the Hasty Market parking lot at Main Street East and Sanford Avenue South. The pair kept running, and the agreed statement of facts alleges the friend turned while running and fired the gun.

The bullet hit Al-Hasnawi's abdomen. He died in hospital an hour later.

## **'It's happening ... they're here'**

Matheson was later arrested at his apartment. He texted his friend with "It's happening ... they're here" and "Dissapear (sic)."

Matheson appeared in court with his girlfriend Tuesday. His brown hair was closely shorn, and he wore a grey hoodie and pair of baggy jeans hung low on his waist, held up by a belt.

Behind him, Al-Hasnawi's mother and father watched quietly.

"Being here has been very hard on me in many different ways," said Amal Alzurufi in a victim impact statement.

"I think of (Yosif) almost every minute."

## Plea deal for helping with the case

She said she doesn't hold a grudge against Matheson, but "I do ask you to think of what you did and try to make better choices in life."

Matheson's lawyer, Jordana Goldlist, said he is. Matheson is working for a roofer, she said, and is in a good relationship with his girlfriend. He's also reconnecting with his daughter.

"He has been helpful in the prosecution against the shooter," she said. "He has, in fact, from the very beginning."

The accused shooter's case will be back in court Nov. 14.

Meanwhile, two paramedics, who were fired by the city, face criminal charges in relation to Al-Hasnawi's treatment at the scene. They'll be back in court Dec. 4.