

# Israel Blamed for October 7; Pro-Israel Activist Blamed for Being Assaulted

*From Phyllis Chesler*

*Dexter Van Zile writes in [Islamist Watch](#) today. These are edited highlights; it is worth reading in its entirety*

On September 12, Caleb Gannon, 31, attacked a U.S. Army veteran in Newton, Massachusetts.

Gannon was wounded by a gunshot as the veteran defended himself. The attack, and what has followed, reflect a worrying trend of tolerance for acts of violence by supporters of Hamas and their allies. A *Focus on Western Islamism (FWI)* investigation reveals the key facts, and their worrying implications.



Supporters of Scott Hayes, a pro-Israel activist, gather on the steps of Newton District Court on September 13, 2024, following his arraignment. Hayes was charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon after defending himself from an attack by Caleb Gannon, an anti-Israel activist. Without hesitation, supporters contributed the \$5,000 needed to get Hayes released on bond. (Photo: Dexter Van Zile) Dexter Van Zile

On the evening of the attack, Gannon made his way to a busy intersection just over half a mile away from his parents'

house in Newton, Mass. Once there, he saw several activists who had gathered on the sidewalk to call for the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. Gannon, a Dungeons and Dragons aficionado who has a penchant for playing guitar, drums and bass and posting video of his performances on Instagram, made obscene and juvenile gestures at the protesters, accusing them of supporting “genocide.”

After working himself into a frenzy, Gannon ran across the street through heavy traffic, punched (well-known pro-Israel activist by the name of Scott Hayes) a 47-year-old Iraqi war veteran in the face and then tackled him to the ground, smashing his victim’s head on the sidewalk. Gannon then put his arm around his victim’s neck in an apparent effort to choke him into unconsciousness.

Fortunately, the assault came to an abrupt end when Hayes allegedly used his pistol, which he was licensed to carry, to shoot Gannon in the belly. After Gannon stopped fighting and took off his shirt, the pro-Israel protesters Gannon previously accused of supporting “genocide” tended to his wounds and called police who took him to Beth-Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston where he was put into a medically induced coma and intubated to stabilize his condition.

The police arrested the bruised and bloodied Hayes, charging him with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and violating the civil rights of his attacker and kept him overnight in a jail cell in police headquarters. The initial charges leveled at Hayes by the Newton Police Department astonished and dismayed people in Boston’s pro-Israel community who have witnessed increasing levels of violence and hostility toward Jews and their allies in American society since the October 7 massacre.

“Once [Hayes] was on the ground, lethal force was justified,” said Mathew Garland, a Massachusetts-based security consultant and instructor. “Thirty seconds after someone starts choking

you, you lose consciousness,” added Garland, who refrained from giving further identifying details for fear of retribution from pro-Hamas agitators. The size of the attacker is irrelevant in such instances, Garland said. “You don’t know what he’s carrying in his pocket. He could take out a knife and stab you in the chest.”

Within hours of the shooting, Hayes’s friends and supporters start a GoFundMe page to raise money for his legal fees. Before midnight on Thursday, September 12, 2024, the day of the shooting, it had garnered more than \$100,000 and within a few days, more than \$250,000.

Glenn Mackinlay from McCarter and English, a top-ranked law firm in Boston, declares the shooting a “textbook case of self-defense.” As of this writing, no charges have been filed against Gannon.

“The charges against Hayes fly in the face of every single one of the 13 unrefuted witness statements taken by police officers at the scene,” says Massachusetts attorney Karen Hurvitz. “Each witness reported that after yelling at the demonstrators, Gannon ran across the street and attacked Hayes, jumping at him, punching him in the face and knocking him over. Even after Gannon was shot, he was still wrestling with Hayes. When the officers arrived and then arrested Hayes, multiple people protested, confirming that Hayes was innocent and had been attacked. Hayes had visible facial injuries.”

Hurvitz was shocked to see that in their report to the Middlesex District Attorney Newton police charged Hayes with a violation of Gannon’s constitutional rights.

“There is no constitutional right to physically attack someone you disagree with,” she said.

In addition to highlighting the manner in which Islamists and their allies on the left have fomented and taken advantage of what appears to be a mental health crisis on the part of young

people in the United States, Gannon's self-destructive attack on Hayes is emblematic of the increase in hostility toward Jews and their allies in American society that has been evident in the U.S. in the months since October 7.

"It's getting worse and the worst part is that the authorities don't do anything about it, and these people are getting more brazen," said Eli Davidyan, a Massachusetts-based activist who attended a pro-Israel rally held in Newton on Sunday, September 15, 2024, three days after the assault. "People feel it's open season on the Jews."

Predictably enough, the Massachusetts chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), an Islamist organization that has [played a central role](#) in importing Hamas-style Jew-hatred from the Middle East into American society since its founding in the early 1990s, spun Gannon's attack and the consequences it engendered into a story about violence against "pro-Palestinian" activists in a statement issued on September 13, 2024, the day after the attack.

Given the protection Hayes afforded to pro-Israel activists, many of them Jews, and Iranian human rights activists who have suffered harassment and bullying at the hands of pro-Hamas agitators since October 7, it comes as no surprise that his supporters were able to gather the \$5,000 bond required to get him out of jail less than an hour after the conditions of his bail were announced Newton District Court on Friday, September 13, 2024.

Virtually every one of the 60 or people who waited in the courtroom for hours to witness Hayes's 3 pm arraignment readily handed over whatever cash they had on hand to achieve his release. And when the money in their pockets, wallets and purses, was insufficient, a few people bolted to the ATM to get the remaining funds needed to post his \$5,000 bond.

Gannon, for his part, has kept a low profile since he attacked

Hayes and suffered the consequences. No one answered the door at his house in Newton when a reporter from FWI rang the doorbell in hopes of learning of his condition three days after the attack. And while Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan is reportedly going to file assault and battery charges against Gannon, it hadn't happened a week after he tackled and punched Hayes just a few minutes before sundown on Thursday, September 13, 2024.

*Read it [all here](#).*