

# In KC, his roommate lay dead. Alleged killer said, 'Call the police. I need help'

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The negative voices inside 20-year-old Brayon Noe Arguijo-Mejia's head seemed to be getting louder, enough so that his friend across the hall, Elizabeth Ojeda, worried about the young Honduran.

"I would just tell him, 'Don't listen to people that are bad influences on you,'" Ojeda said. "Pick yourself up. Just work and ignore people. Ignore all the negativity. Just steady yourself."

People around the building, at East 12th Street and Askew Avenue in the east side Lykins neighborhood, had heard that Arguijo-Mejia perhaps was being bullied.

Some had seen him crying in his car.

Then on Monday, around 6:45 p.m., just as Ojeda was headed into her kitchen to cook meat and rice, bullets began to fly.

Thirteen shots in all. Loud. Fast. Five jettisoned from Arguijo-Mejia's apartment, through his door, through the hallway wall, with three blasting into Ojeda's kitchen. Plaster chips sprayed across the room.

"I told my kids to get on the floor," Ojeda, 33, said.



Elizabeth Ojeda, 33, points to the holes in her kitchen wall left by three bullets that flew in from the apartment across the hall, allegedly fired by her friend and neighbor, Brayon Noe Arguijo-Mejia, 20.

## VIOLENCE AT EAST 12TH AND ASKEW AVENUE

Seven years back, when the youngest son of Ojeda's four children was just 1 year old, he was shot in a drive-by. The bullet penetrated his hip, thrust through his knee and shattered his femur.

And just in March, another neighbor, living in the basement of the building's five apartments, was found dead. Derrick Cope-land, 58, had apparently been there for days. Also shot.

Then Monday evening, within seconds, there was quiet. The gunfire ceased.

Ojeda's said her boyfriend, Julio, hurried into the hall. Arguijo-Mejia's recent apartment mate, 42-year-old Arelio Antonio-Lazaro, lay dead in his own blood. Antonio-Lazaro's son was seriously wounded, reportedly shot in the stomach multiple times.

Arguijo-Mejia stood there.

"Julio actually took the gun from him," Ojeda said. "When Brayon seen

me, I was like, 'Brayan, why?' He just froze, and he hugged me. He was just like, 'I can't do it. I can't do it. Call the police. I need help.' He told me the voices in his head told him to kill him."

## FEELING SAD AND TRAUMATIZED: 'HE'S A GOOD PERSON'

Five days later, Ojeda said she is left with a mixture of confused feelings: "Traumatized," she said, along with uncertainty surrounding what happened and why.

"I don't know," she said. "He told Julio he messed up. I took him outside. Brayon followed me. He was like, 'Call the police, please.' And I was like, 'I can't, Brayon, I can't.' And he was like, 'Please call them.' And I called the cops, and he stayed by my side the whole time until they got here."

She feels sadness certainly for the roommates — the father who was killed, the son who was shot. But sadness also, along with regret, surrounding Arguijo-Mejia.

"He's a good person," she said. "He tried to help everybody and do his best. I wish I could have helped him more. I could have been there for him more. I really looked at him like a littler brother, honestly. And I tried to help him mentally. But some people you can't help."

In and around the Lykins neighborhood, there are many who are hardly surprised by the sound of gunshots. Gunfire shakes the night air so often, they say, it is easy to mistake for firecrackers.

Still, it rankles long-time residents, such as Gustavo Orozco, a 20-year resident, who wants the neighborhood to improve.

"Bad. Scary," he said on his porch. He wasn't around when Monday's shooting happened across from his home. He works a night shift. "Bad for the neighbors. This cannot happen."

## FALSE IMPRESSION

Attorney Gregg Lombardi, who has been involved with the neighborhood for years and maintains an office near Lykins Square Park, in the heart of the community, lamented the killing for those involved, but also

for the neighborhood.

"Anytime there's something like this that happens in Lykins, word goes out far and wide that there's been a murder in the urban core and in Lykins," Lombardi said. "Then people think, 'Oh my gosh, this is an incredibly unsafe place to be. I don't want to be there. I don't want to do business there.' Really, on a day-to-day basis, the neighborhood is a very safe place to be."

"I come down here every day, and I talk with homeless people, I go out in the community a lot, I walk around," he said. "It is a very safe place. It gives people this false impression that the neighborhood is this kind of wasteland, which is not true."

Part of the neighborhood, near Lykins Park, once a haven for drug use, prostitution and homelessness, is going through a rebirth.

Over the last two years, Habitat for Humanity, in league with Neighborhood Legal Support of Kansas City, and other nonprofits and churches, have helped erect a strip of 10 new homes along the park, making it a model for successful neighborhood revitalization.

On Tuesday, Arguijo-Mejia was charged with one count of second-degree murder, one count of first-degree assault and two counts of armed criminal action in Jackson County Circuit Court

In a probable cause statement dated Tuesday, a Kansas City police detective said the other victim who was shot was still unconscious, intubated and had life-threatening injuries. Prosecutors said Thursday that this condition was stable.

# Pentagon sees growing espionage threat from Israel

BY JULIAN E. BARNES AND ERIC SCHMITT  
NYT News Service/Syndicate Stories

## WASHINGTON

Recent U.S. intelligence reports have raised concerns about Israeli spy agencies eavesdropping on U.S. negotiators working on a peace deal with Iran, amid rising concern over a more general counterintelligence threat by Israel.

Israel and the United States have long known, and tolerated, that each was spying on the other. But an intensified Israeli effort to learn about U.S. positions in talks with Iran has crossed a line, according to some U.S. officials.

The reports include concerns that Israel has stepped up its efforts to eavesdrop on senior U.S. officials, including Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump's top negotiator; Elbridge A. Colby, the Pentagon's top policy official; and one of his main deputies, Michael P. DiMino IV.

Another report, written by the Defense Intelligence Agency and other military intelligence offices and focused on earlier events going back several years, said that the counterintelligence threat level posed by Israel had been increased in recent weeks to the top level, from high to critical. The report, to

which the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency contributed, outlines various efforts by Israel to spy on U.S. military personnel and government officials.

The reports and the intensified concern about Israeli spying come at an especially sensitive time. Israel and the U.S. have been fighting the war against Iran together and have never had such close military coordination as they do now, with Israeli military officers working side by side with their American counterparts at U.S. Central Command.

The U.S. military is sharing huge amounts of tactical and operational information with its Israeli counterparts. But senior U.S. officials said that Israel is looking for insights into Trump's strategy and shifting stances on the peace talks.

The new warning could potentially complicate efforts to further integrate military war planning between U.S. Central Command and Israel, especially if the Pentagon makes a decision to place new restrictions on information shared with Israeli officers.

There has already been tension between the two nations as Trump pursues a peace deal even as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel seeks to further degrade Iran's

capabilities, weaken or topple its theocratic government and assault Tehran's proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah. The DIA report was drafted after incidents in which U.S. defense personnel in Israel detected that software to tap their communications had been surreptitiously installed on their phones.

The Defense Department declined to comment. A White House official, speaking on the condition their name not be used, said the account was false.

A spokesperson for the Israeli Embassy in Washington also disputed claims that Israel poses a counterintelligence threat, saying that Israel does not spy on U.S. officials or entities.

The developments were described by several current and former U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence matters.

They said that in some respects, the counterintelligence warning is no surprise. Israel has long engaged in aggressive intelligence collection operations against its enemies and its allies, as does the United States.

Still, Israel's counterintelligence threat level is now higher than any other ally and higher than some adversarial countries. Of U.S. allies, only South Korea, which is rated at

high in certain situations, approaches the concern with Israel's espionage efforts, the officials said.

The aggressiveness of the Israeli intelligence collection on top U.S. officials during the second Trump administration has been "unhinged," one senior official said.

Two senior U.S. military officials said that U.S. personnel, particularly those serving in Israel or with Israeli counterparts, were well aware of the counterintelligence risks before the new report.

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal assessments, said U.S. personnel employ a range of security procedures and protocols to help counter the threat and to protect their cellphones and other electronic devices, especially while traveling in Israel, but declined to describe those measures in detail for security reasons.

Cooperation between the two militaries is very close, but each side also needs to keep its most sensitive information secret.

At the U.S.-led Civil-Military Coordination Center in Kiryat Gat, Israel, for instance, U.S. and Israeli military and diplomatic personnel work side by side to enforce the Gaza ceasefire and facilitate humanitarian efforts. But the building also has a U.S.-only floor and an Israeli-only floor where personnel from each country can discuss the most sensitive topics.

The report says counter-

intelligence incidents began increasing in late 2024, as the Biden administration pressed Israel to curb its attacks on Gaza, and continued into 2025, as the Trump administration weighed options to attack Iran.

The report, which incorporated contributions from a number of military intelligence agencies, also details several episodes in recent years. In 2021, Israeli military intelligence officers were caught planting listening devices at DIA headquarters. Last year, officers from Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence agency, were discovered to have tried to plant a listening device in a Secret Service vehicle.

While the DIA document does not explicitly discuss the peace negotiations, other recent intelligence reports have raised concern about Israelis listening to Witkoff and other top negotiators as they try to reach a long-term agreement for a peace deal between the U.S. and Iran.

The tendency of some senior Trump administration officials to fly on private aircraft, to conduct national security business on their personal phones and to reject staffing from U.S. embassies abroad made them especially vulnerable targets for the spy services of allies and adversaries alike, said a former senior U.S. official who has dealt extensively with Israel.

Other current officials also acknowledged the use of personal cellphones by top U.S. officials have

made them easy targets for eavesdropping.

U.S. and Israel were largely aligned at the beginning of the war with Iran, with Trump endorsing Netanyahu's long-sought goal to push the theocratic government from power. But the war aims quickly diverged, as the United States focused more on trying to erode Iran's military capabilities to force concessions at the bargaining table, while Israel hoped the Iranian hard-line government would lose its grip on power.

## BIRTHDAYS: JUNE 8

### Britannica

Biographical information from June 8 is from Encyclopædia Britannica. Explore more at [britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com).

**Julianna Margulies**, American actress (b. 1966).

**Tim Berners-Lee**, British scientist (b. 1955).

**Joan Rivers**, American entertainer (b. 1933).

**Frank Lloyd Wright**, American architect (b. 1867).

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