

# DETROIT NATIVE SUN

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UNITING & ENLIGHTENING THE COMMUNITY

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By Valerie D. Lockhart  
SUN EXECUTIVE EDITOR

## Killer could be freed to Kill Again

Justice is not always just.

A Macomb County jury recently found Dejon Allen Drake not guilty of the second-degree murder of Olufemi "Louis" Stafford, and his mother is questioning why.

"They let a killer loose," Leola Stafford, his mother, said. "Nobody sees any value in Louis' life. They didn't even pronounce his name right in court proceedings. Everyone failed my son. They thought it was one black man fighting another. They had to call the police four times for them to respond. Nobody stood up and did the right thing. I feel helpless to do anything about it."

Drake, 26 of Chesterfield, was found guilty of a lesser offense, felony firearm possession and carrying a concealed weapon during the shooting that took place on July 29, 2023, at the Aspen Creek Apartments at 30001 23 Mile Road in Chesterfield. He will be sentenced on December 17 and faces up to five years in prison.

"It's not right that he could be sent home for Christmas, while my son is dead for helping out a homeless co-worker," Stafford said.

Louis worked at Taco Bell as a manager and befriended Drake, who was homeless and eating from a trash can behind the restaurant.

*A cry for Justice*

Good Samaritan Olufemi "Louis" Stafford

Dejon Drake

threaten Louie, and she knew he had a gun. They swept it under the rug. There is video," Stafford said. "Even in his craziness, my son stood up for him and told the manager not to cost him his job. They started fighting. Dejon got mad because he got beat up. Louis told him 50 times to leave. He followed him home from work. Who brings a gun to their friend's house? Louis grabbed the gun from him and tossed it. Dejon went and picked it up and shot him, while Louis was throwing his stuff out of his house. He went there to kill my son, and he knows he did."

Because Louis' DNA was found on the gun, Drake's attorney Elisha Oakes said the shooting was in self-defense.

Yet, an eyewitness said that Louis fired no shots.

Louis' family hopes their reading of impact statements during the sentencing will convince the judge to impose the maximum sentence for the gun charge.

Louis is Stafford's second son to die. Another son died of COVID nearly a year earlier.

"Nobody cares about Louie, just me. I've been praying trying to manage my expectation of justice. I feel there is none," Stafford said. "He wasn't doing anything wrong. He was trying to help someone. I have to leave Michigan, so my crazy can be managed."

Looking beyond Drake's tattoo-covered face and rough appearance, he obtained a job at the restaurant.

Restaurant employees reportedly said Drake was often seen at work carrying a gun on his waist, but they were afraid to speak out.

When Louis, 27, learned of Drake allegedly being thrown out by both his mother's and brother's homes to live on the street, he felt pity for the new co-worker.

"There had to be a great reason for why his own family threw him out onto the street," Stafford said. "He had been living outside for months before he got a job. When his brother put him out of the Aspen Creek Apartments, he got caught sleeping in the laundry room. They shooed him off, and he went to another laundry room on the other side of the complex."

Drake resorted to sleeping near a garbage bin behind the restaurant.

Louis, who had just moved into Aspen Creek across the street from the restaurant, offered Drake temporary housing to help him get on his feet.

Two weeks later, Louis was shot dead by Drake.

Drake's erratic behavior at home and work caused Louis to have second thoughts. An argument erupted at work, causing Louis to tell Drake to get out of his house.

"One manager heard Dejon

## Democratic women Legislators forge historic resistance as GOP take Federal control

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In a historic shift following the 2024 elections, a record-breaking number of Democratic women will serve in state legislatures starting in 2025, solidifying state-level Democratic power amid a looming federal Republican trifecta under the incoming Trump administration. The legislators, many in leadership roles, will spearhead resistance efforts while shaping the Democratic Party's future leadership pipeline.

State legislatures, widely recognized as the bedrock of American governance, now host 1,584 Democratic women lawmakers, outnumbering their Republican counterparts by nearly two-to-one. Women will hold roughly one-third of legislative seats nationwide, with at least 19 states increasing the total representation of women. The milestone marks a stark contrast to Congress, where the number of women legislators has declined for the first time since 2016.

Notably, Democratic women will serve as House speakers in eight states, including Hawaii, which will see its first woman in this role. Additionally, for the first time in U.S. history, three states will boast majority-women Democratic legislatures. Nearly 100 women will hold senior leadership positions, emphasizing their growing influence on state-level governance.

Officials said the victories reflect the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee's (DLCC) commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion within state governments. The DLCC said it repeatedly has underscored the importance of electing women to counter the incoming administration's policies, which critics warn could jeopardize economic opportunities, reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ protections, education, and climate progress under Project 2025.

"Electing a record number of women to state legislatures couldn't come at a more impactful time," said DLCC Interim Communications Director Sam Paisley. "Project 2025 and the incoming Trump administration dangerously target women and minorities, and states will represent the most powerful counterbalance to stop the MAGA hate from becoming the law of the land. Women deserve a seat at the table at all levels of government, and their growing numbers in state legislatures will impact policy today while building a strong pipeline of future leaders."

With Democratic women now leading in eight state Houses and holding pivotal roles in nearly 100 legislative leadership positions, the DLCC said it plans to leverage their presence as a critical firewall against what it describes as threats posed by a federal GOP-dominated government.

"The work we've done ensures a powerful and diverse firewall is present in the states," Paisley added.