



People v. Hayes Case Brief

People v. Hayes is the trial of Jamie Hayes, a student at Central Coast University (CCU) on a track and field scholarship. Hayes faces a felony charge of murder for the homicide on May 15, 2014, of Lee Valdez, a campus security guard. Hayes is raising the affirmative defense of defense of another in order to claim the homicide was justifiable.

The prosecution alleges that Hayes struck Valdez in the head with a baseball bat while Valdez was lawfully restraining Casey Barns, a suspect in recent vehicle thefts. Barns is a student at CCU and a member of the track team. The incident occurred near the track team's off-campus house (on university-owned land policed by campus security). The prosecution argues that due to a history of conflict between campus security and the track team, Hayes had shown animus against campus security and particularly Officer Valdez, and that Hayes was very active in a group against police brutality. Eyewitness testimony will show that Hayes struck Valdez while Valdez was weaponless. The prosecution argues further that a message on social media in Hayes's name is virtually similar to an anonymous handwritten note mailed to campus security declaring that someone was going to fight back against Valdez. A prosecution expert in handwriting analysis will testify to show that the handwritten note matches the writing of Hayes.

The defense argues that Hayes did strike Valdez but had not formed the intent to commit a homicide against Valdez. The defense argues that Hayes could see Valdez restraining Barns from across the street while Hayes stood on the porch of the track team housing, and that Hayes reasonably believed that Valdez was using unlawful, deadly force against Barns. Defense witnesses will testify that Hayes clearly heard Barns calling out for help and complaining of being choked to death, and that Valdez was holding a baton against Barns's throat. The defense will offer witnesses to testify that Officer Valdez had a history of antagonism and violent behavior against the track team, particularly against Barns, and that Hayes had a reputation for honesty and nonviolence. A defense expert in handwriting analysis will testify to show that the handwritten note mailed to campus security does not positively match Hayes's handwriting.

The pretrial issue involves the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination and concerns a statement made by Hayes during interrogation that Valdez "got what he deserved." The prosecution will argue that Hayes's statement was voluntary and should be included in the prosecution's evidence against Hayes, since the circumstances of the interrogation were constitutional. The defense will counter-argue that the circumstances of the interrogation were harsh enough to make Hayes's statement involuntary and therefore impermissible in the prosecution's case-in-chief.