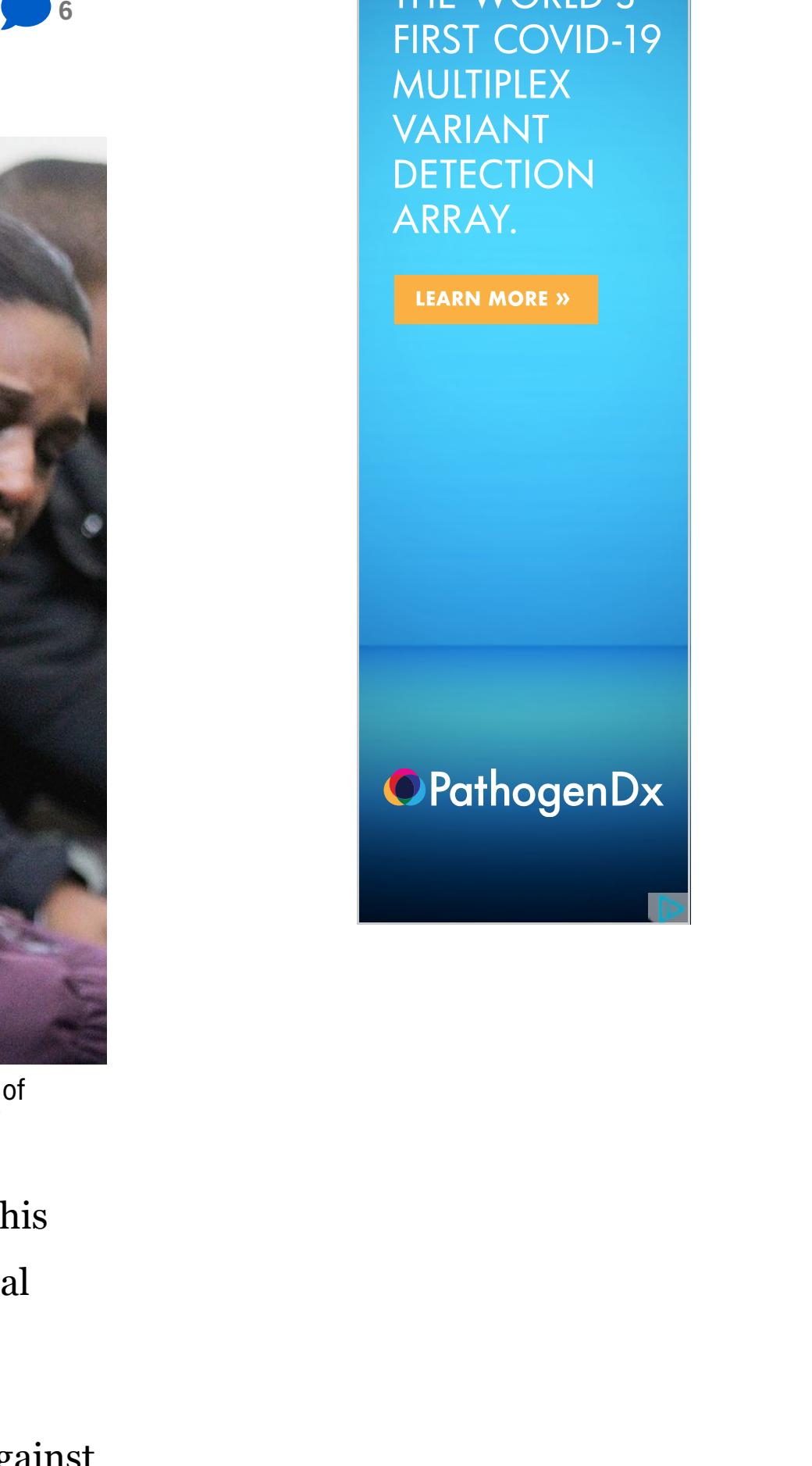


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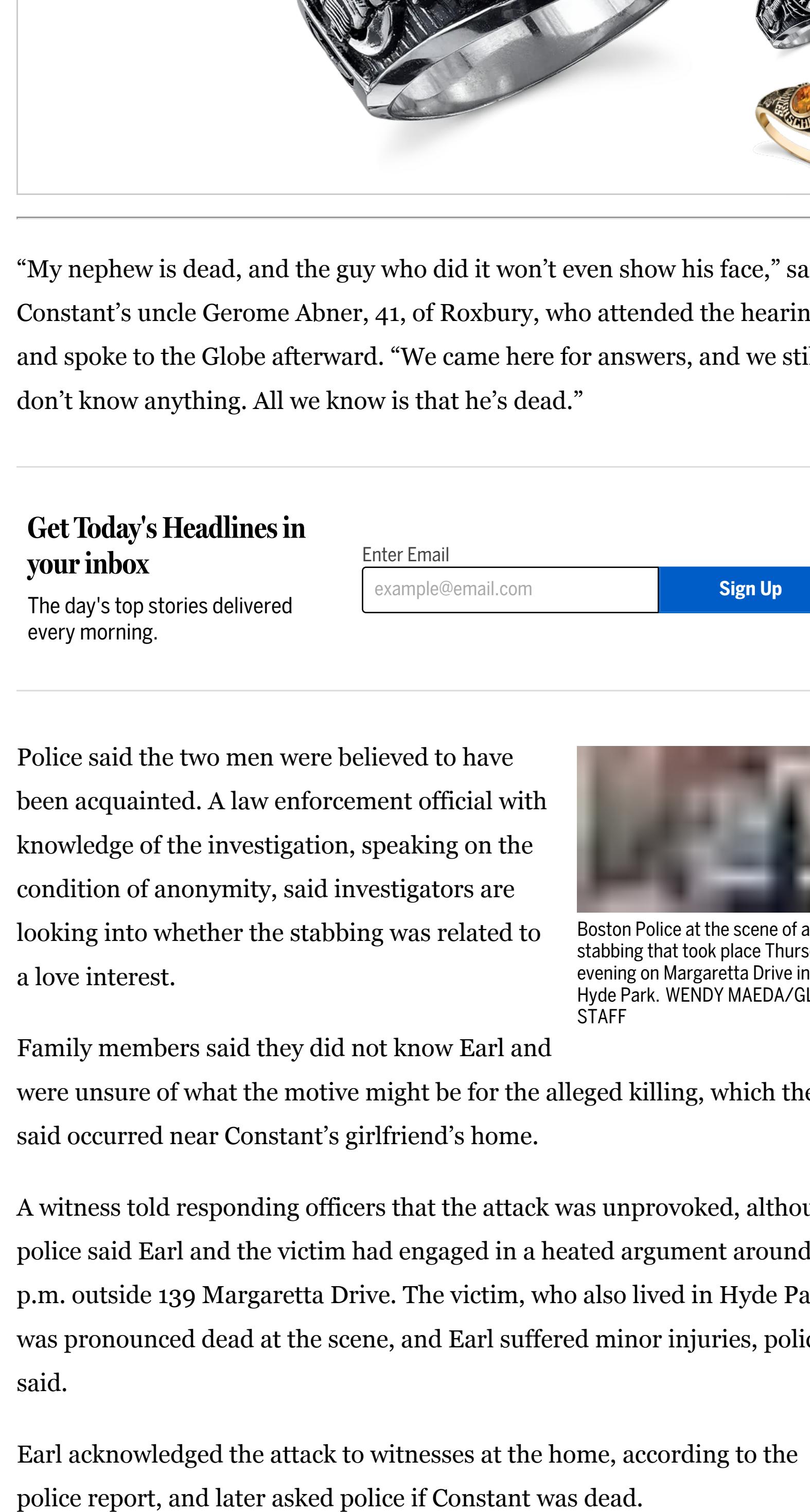


Mattapan man arrested in first Boston homicide of 2014

No arrest in second killing

By Wesley Lowery and John R. Ellement Globe staff, January 10, 2014, 8:59 a.m.



Friends and relatives of homicide victim Samuel Constant attended the arraignment in West Roxbury of William Earl, who authorities believe had a dispute with the deceased. WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

Samuel Constant was the first person killed in Boston this year, but as his family awaited the beginning of proceedings in West Roxbury Municipal Court Friday, they still did not believe that he was gone.

Their doubt turned to rage as the court clerk read the murder charge against William Earl of Mattapan. Some of Constant's family members sobbed; one stormed out.

Prosecutors said Earl, 20, stabbed Constant, 19, outside a Hyde Park home around dinnertime Thursday, but provided no motive.

Earl stood behind the courtroom door Friday morning as his lawyer entered a not guilty plea on his behalf. Earl's face was shielded from the tear-filled eyes of roughly two dozen family members and friends of Constant who sat in the crowded courtroom.

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"My nephew is dead, and the guy who did it won't even show his face," said Constant's uncle Gerome Abner, 41, of Roxbury, who attended the hearing and spoke to the Globe afterward. "We came here for answers, and we still don't know anything. All we know is that he's dead."

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Police said the two men were believed to have been acquainted. A law enforcement official with knowledge of the investigation, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said investigators are looking into whether the stabbing was related to a love interest.

Family members said they did not know Earl and were unsure of what the motive might be for the alleged killing, which they said occurred near Constant's girlfriend's home.

A witness told responding officers that the attack was unprovoked, although police said Earl and the victim had engaged in a heated argument around 6 p.m. outside 139 Margaretta Drive. The victim, who also lived in Hyde Park, was pronounced dead at the scene, and Earl suffered minor injuries, police said.

Earl acknowledged the attack to witnesses at the home, according to the police report, and later asked police if Constant was dead.

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According to the report, another witness told police that Earl said, "I killed someone, and that's what you're going to find."

Later, when questioned by an officer, Earl asked about Constant, saying, "I just want to know if he's dead."

At the scene Thursday night, a 21-year-old woman said she had heard part of the exchange that led to the fatal stabbing.

"It sounded like people were fighting or arguing, and then I got scared and I didn't hear anything else," she told the Globe.

She and a friend said that later they saw a body covered by a sheet in a parking area, with two knives and a patch of blood visible on the pavement.

Assistant District Attorney Tara Burdman successfully petitioned that Earl be held without bail. His next court date was set for Feb. 10.

At the end of Earl's arraignment, Constant's mother stood bolt upright, letting out a pained shriek. She continued to scream as more than a dozen family members escorted her outside.

"Whoa, my baby!" the mother screamed. "I want to see him!"

About five hours after Constant was stabbed to death, a man was shot several times at 136-138 Rowe St. in Roslindale and pronounced dead at the scene, Superintendent in Chief William Gross of Boston police said Thursday night.

Gross said police have no description of the suspect in the Roslindale case, and police said Friday that authorities had no indication that the shooting was linked to the earlier stabbing.

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Boston Police at the scene of a fatal stabbing that took place Thursday evening on Margaretta Drive in Hyde Park. WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

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