

Owner of downtown St. Louis building near daytime execution-style killing says he's 'tired and frustrated'

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By [Jacob Kirn](#) – Managing Editor, St. Louis Business Journal

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The owner of a downtown St. Louis building near the scene of Monday morning's execution-style killing said he's frustrated by the incident, and endorsed a plan from residents that seeks to improve the area.

"People in our building and downtown are reacting like everyone in St. Louis," said [Steve Stone](#), who owns the Globe Building at 710 N. Tucker Blvd. "We're tired and frustrated that our city and state continue to fail to get crime under control. We need to do better."

Police said shortly before 10 a.m. Monday, officers received a call for help regarding a shooting in the 700 block of North Tucker. There, they found [David Saldana](#), a man in his 40s, who had been shot in the head. He was pronounced dead. A preliminary investigation found that the man was involved in a fight with another man at a nearby Shell gas station shortly before the shooting. The suspect, whom police described as 23-year-old [Deshawn Thomas](#), ran from the scene, they said.

At about 2:30 p.m. Monday, a patrol officer saw Thomas in the area and notified district police, who responded and watched as the man entered the St. Louis Public Library on Olive Street. He was taken into custody, and a gun and shell casings were found on him, police said. Thomas was charged with first-degree murder and armed criminal action.

A video of the crime was circulating social media on Tuesday showing a man sitting on the curb while another man stands next to him loading a gun.

After more than 30 seconds of trying to load the firearm, he eventually pulls the trigger, shooting the victim execution-style.

Missouri Sen. [Ben Brown](#), R-Washington, told [KSDK](#) that someone sent him the video, "saying they were just in tears and just asking like, can the Senate do something?"

The state's General Assembly is considering putting St. Louis police under state control, and also appointing a special prosecutor for violent crimes, thereby removing them from the desk of St. Louis Circuit Attorney [Kim Gardner](#), who's been [criticized for her handling of another high-profile incident downtown in which a tourist lost her legs in a car crash](#).

Monday's killing "was just blocks from City Hall and broad daylight," Brown said. "There is always going to be crime to some extent but I don't remember ever seeing the kind of boldness that we're seeing right now or people feel they can go out in broad daylight in public and the horrific scene, execute somebody right on the street."

Stone, owner of the Globe Building, which houses geospatial companies in a sensitive compartmented information facility, said he's still excited for the future.

"My family has owned this building for 40 years and this is the first time a crime like this has landed on our doorstep," Stone said. "This terrible day won't dampen our spirits of opportunities. We continue to believe that the Globe is and will be an important part of a better future for St. Louis."

Still, Stone, a founder of Clayton law firm Stone, Leyton & Gershman, said he endorsed a plan put forward, in part, by downtown residents Dan Pistor and Les Sterman, advocating changes in traffic enforcement, the pursuit of "problem properties," changes in liquor licensing, new approaches for providing homeless services and requirements for surface parking lots.

In a *Business Journal* op-ed published Monday, Pistor and Sterman wrote that they provided the plan for downtown to "leadership of the City and Greater St. Louis Inc. nearly two years ago."

Spokespeople for Greater St. Louis, the region's primary business group, and Gov. Mike Parson didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

A spokesman for St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones said she's received the proposal from Pistor and Sterman, and is "appalled by the blatant act of violence committed in broad daylight against an unhoused man on Monday morning."

"She appreciates the rapid response from the St. Louis Police Department to apprehend a suspect, and remains committed to bringing together law enforcement, judicial partners, and community organizations to tackle the root causes of crime while holding accountable those who commit it," the spokesman said. "The Problem Properties Division has worked to shut down locations like Reign, and it remains in contact with the Shell station owner. The Problem Properties team has requested on-site security as well as security cameras to which the property owners have complied."

The owner of the Shell station at 721 N. Tucker is Tucker Shell LLC, registered to Dong Kyun Lee.

KSDK contributed to this report.

