

## NewsRoom

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Nassau DA investigating Wal-mart Black Friday security

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Dec. 12--The Nassau County district attorney is joining the police department in the criminal investigation into whether Wal-Mart should have anticipated greater security measures for the Black Friday frenzy that led to the death of a temporary security guard stampeded by shoppers at the Valley Stream store, a DA spokesman said Friday.

"The focus will really be on documents and evidence that shed some light on Wal-Mart's security plan and what they expected or should have expected to happen that day, and whether they failed to perceive or intentionally disregarded the risks associated with an event like this," said spokesman Eric Phillips.

The district attorney's office has reviewed evidence including employee records and surveillance film of the store in the Green Acres mall where Jdimytai Damour, 34, of Jamaica was trampled to death as he stood next to the front door, Phillips said.

A Wal-Mart representative said he was aware of the district attorney's investigation and preparing a response Friday afternoon.

In a further development, the district attorney has also subpoenaed a local news station's footage of a meeting at the Wal-Mart several days before Black Friday, where a group of workers can be seen chuckling at an employee's question about security, according to station employees.

"We'll have enough people at the door," is the reply, from a man standing off-camera during the managers' meeting on Nov. 24 filmed by a Long Island News Tonight reporter for the New York Institute of Technology, which runs the nightly news program.

Laura Lopez, a NYIT communications graduate student who was invited to film a report on the store's preparations for Black Friday, said that at least one employee told her he was concerned about security.

"He said there was a lot of pushing last year, it was cold outside, there was a lot of people with babies and he didn't want that to happen again this year," Lopez said.

In response to earlier inquiries, a Wal-Mart spokesman referred to a statement issued on Nov. 28 by Hank Mullany, president of Wal-Mart's Northeast Division, citing the store's efforts to increase security for Black Friday.

"As we've said, we are committed to continuing to work with local law enforcement officials so that together we can implement even stronger safety measures going forward," the statement said.

A lawyer representing two shoppers who filed a lawsuit saying they were hurt in the melee, said the tape of the meeting is damning.

"It clearly shows employees, management and the Wal-Mart organization had significant prior knowledge of the lack of security and chaos that they created," said **Bruce Baron** of Brooklyn. "It wasn't a surprise."

A message left for Jordan Hecht of Manhattan, who is representing Damour's family in a lawsuit against Wal-Mart, was not returned Friday.

--- **Index References** ---

Company: WAL MART STORES INC

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