

## Chelsea mother charged in wake of her young son's death

By Laura Crimaldi  
and Esmy Jimenez  
GLOBE STAFF

**CHELSEA** — Yael Guardado Prudencio was a 3-year-old boy who bore the marks of a chronic illness. Red and purple patches from hemophilia sometimes bloomed on his forehead, making his medical challenges apparent even to those who had limited contact with him.

A neighbor at his Chelsea apartment building described the child as "so quiet and lovely," but noted his face sometimes looked bruised — pos-

sibly a mark of his hemophilia. He also had a seizure disorder, a prosecutor said.

Yael's mother, Jennifer Prudencio, 25, dressed him in sports-themed pajamas and took him out in a stroller packed with a bottle of milk, said the neighbor, who asked that she not be named.

In the last week of his life, Yael was ailing, prosecutors said. He had fallen during a recent seizure, leaving a bloody wound on his face that refused to heal, Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Audrey Mark said in court ear-

Prosecutors allege that Jennifer Prudencio left her 3-year-old at home in the care of his siblings, ages 8 and 7, while she drank at a bar. When she returned home the following morning, her son was dead.

lier this month.

But on April 6, prosecutors allege that Prudencio left him at home in Chelsea in the care of his siblings, ages 8 and 7, while she drank at a bar in Revere and then spent the night at her boyfriend's home in Somerville. When Prudencio returned home the following morning, Yael was dead.

How he died has not yet been disclosed, and as of Thursday the Chelsea city clerk's office said it hadn't received a death certificate for the boy.

Prudencio, who faces charges of manslaughter and reckless endanger-

ment of a child, has pleaded not guilty. Her lawyer Peter Marano called the case a "tragedy."

A few weeks before he died, Guardado, Yael's great aunt, said she thought the boy at her apartment near Chelsea City Hall. Yael looked happy and playful albeit a little pale, she said.

She said Yael's father, Ervin Guardado, is grief-stricken. He has organized a GoFundMe appeal to cover Yael's funeral expenses.

"I just know that my nephew is

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## Judge orders \$1m to be returned to Mass. man

John B. Wilson was cleared in Varsity Blues admissions scandal

By Tonya Alanez  
GLOBE STAFF

A federal judge has ordered the government to return \$1 million to a Lynnfield father whose bribery and fraud convictions in the Varsity Blues college admission scandal were overturned and who was resentenced last year to six months of house arrest for a tax charge.

John B. Wilson, 64, of Lynnfield and Hyannis Port, argued in US District Court in Boston that he should recoup the \$1 million he wired to the confessed leader of the bribery scheme after an appeals court overturned two of Wilson's convictions in the high-profile case.

Wilson said he, his wife, and children are scarred by the nearly six-year legal battle to clear their names, but they were pleased with the ruling that "brings my innocent family one step closer to finding closure."

"Those wounds are going to take a long time to heal," Wilson, a private equity investor, said in a telephone interview Friday evening. "The government tried to weaponize the justice system to punish me and my children for not pleading guilty. I never misrepresented them, and they earned all their credentials, and they were highly qualified. Having them attacked in this process has been heartbreaking as a dad."

Wilson's lawyers called the ruling "significant" and said it "underscores the egregious mistakes of the government's investigation into Wilson's dealings with the confessed con man Rick Singer."

Federal prosecutors had forfeited the money as part of Singer's criminal case and determined it must be turned over to the government.

Prosecutors said that before Wilson wired the money to Singer, the men discussed "side door" opportunities for two of Wilson's children at Stanford and Harvard universities.

A spokeswoman for the US attorney's office declined to comment on the order.

Wilson said he wired the money in 2018 to William "Rick" Singer, who is currently serving a federal prison sentence, as a lawful donation to an IRS-certified foundation to support college programs at Harvard and Stanford universities.

"It is something that has been longstanding at many universities for many generations and it continues to this day," Wilson

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PHOTOS BY DAVID L. STANGL/GLOBE STAFF

## The man behind the art

A wooden elephant and two giraffes appeared on the Somerville Community Path. Meet the guy who put them there.

By Spencer Buehl  
GLOBE STAFF

Typically, when big and flashy public art pops up on a busy street corner, it's a whole to-do. Ribbons are cut. Elected officials herald the display. The artist is celebrated.

Things can be a little different on the Somerville Community Path, where even large and fantastical works of art can simply appear, as if by magic.

That's the story, anyway, of how a trio of giant interactive sculptures came to find themselves looming over the multi-use paved route, a short walk or bike ride from Davis Square, and became some of the path's most recognizable landmarks.

First came two 20-foot-tall wooden giraffes decorated with multi-colored polka dots and ears that, when a string is pulled, wiggle up and down.

Then came another: A wooden frame roughly the size of an adult elephant, with ears that flap when its trunk is lifted, and which is painted bright yellow.

Did Hayward Zwerling, a retired



Artist Hayward Zwerling, a retired endocrinologist, built and deployed the two wooden giraffes (George and Big Poppy) and the elephant (Elly) that adorn the Somerville Community Path.

Somerville endocrinologist and amateur woodworker, ask anyone before erecting his renditions of some of the animal kingdom's largest beasts on public land?

"No, I just did it," he said. "I didn't think anybody would say yes."

At first, Zwerling kept his identity a secret to avoid any trouble. Years later, as his menagerie of guerrilla art — which does not, to be clear, include any gorillas — has become a fixture of the pathway, he's willing to take credit for his creations, and the countless smiles they've inspired for the many thousands who pass by.

The story begins, he said, about seven years ago. He'd been pondering retirement after a long career in medicine, and a thought nagged at him: "What am I going to do to make my life worth it?" he asked himself.

"What I decided is that I get a kick out of just making people either smile or think about something that they hadn't thought about before, making them look at the world a little differently."

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JOHN TELMACK/GLOBE STAFF

**REMEMBERING CEYDI** — A memorial Mass was held at the Most Holy Redeemer Church in East Boston on Saturday morning for Ceydi Karina Corrales, the 9-year-old girl who died from injuries she sustained during a fire at her home on April 2. **B2**

## Climate advocates feel urgency to 'take advantage of what we have now'

By Erin Douglas  
GLOBE STAFF

**NEW YORK** — In a bustling conference center overlooking the Hudson River, thousands of climate advocates rose to their feet, cheering as former vice president Al Gore, 76, exited the stage. He ended his more than two-hour-long presentation at his signature "Climate Reality Project" conference by pointing to other countries where the climate moment has meaningfully moved the polls, and he challenged his supporters.

"Will Climate Reality leaders here in the Northeastern part of the US have a similar impact on our upcoming election?" Gore asked. "This is a moment unlike any other in human history."

Many of the roughly 3,000 people who attended the conference in New York last weekend said the 2024 presidential election is critical to keep the United States on a path of decarbonization. They point to former president Donald Trump, the leading Republican candidate for president, who rolled back dozens of climate and environmental rules during his last administration and is expected to do so again, should he take office.

Even more urgent than stumping for President Biden, they said, is deploying the federal money from his large climate packages as quickly as possible.

"This election feels really pivotable to keep climate action on the menu," said Maya Nguyen, 22, an environmental studies and history double major at Dartmouth College. Since she lives in New Hampshire, a swing state, Nguyen left the conference thinking about how to make others aware of federal climate incentives.

The lead-up to November, Nguyen said, is a time to "take advantage of what we have now."

Forty-five percent of US adults said in a new Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll that they've become more concerned about climate change in the last year.

In 2022, Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law, the nation's largest federal investment in renewable energy in history. It has the potential to allocate hundreds of billions of dollars to fight climate change — largely through building infrastructure to accelerate the US economy's transition to clean energy.

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