

TEENS ARE HELD IN BEATING DEATH - MOTIVE IN THE SLAYING OF A PAKISTAN NATIVE WAS ROBBERY, POLICE SAY

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Although the case raised fears of a hate crime, police say robbery appears to be the motive behind an attack that left a Detroit man from Pakistan beaten to **death** and his brother badly injured.

The brothers -- Muhammad Anwar Sheikh, 69, of Detroit and Muhammad Aslam, 66, a resident of Pakistan who was visiting the area -- were walking home from a mosque when they were attacked about 11 p.m. Monday.

Two youths, 16 and 17, have been charged with felony murder.

Sheikh, who immigrated to the United States from Pakistan **in** 1989 and became a U.S. citizen **in** 1996, died shortly after being beaten at Carpenter Avenue and Klinger Street **in** Detroit, near the Hamtramck border.

His brother, a doctor, was treated at a hospital and released.

The suspects **are** 17-year-old Christopher Hopkins of Detroit, who was arraigned **in** 36th District Court on Thursday, and a 16-year-old Hamtramck male. He is being **held in** the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility, pending a decision by the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office on whether to treat him as an adult or a juvenile.

Both **teens** gave statements to police, who said they confessed to two attacks that night involving three victims. All the victims were South Asian men wearing robes, police said.

Sheikh's son, Muhammad Naveeb Sheikh, 38, said his father and uncle had attended evening prayers Monday at the Masjid al-Falah mosque on McDougall, near the family home.

He said his father worked for 10 years as a cashier at a Dunkin' Donuts on 8 Mile and Gratiot.

The 16-year-old suspect told police that Hopkins had convinced him earlier **in** the evening to "dress **in** all black" and go looking for people to rob. According to the police statement, the boy said they first came across a man **in** his 40s from Bangladesh, who was dressed **in** a robe and skull cap, and asked him for a lighter.

Hopkins punched the man, who fell to the ground, but they found no money and fled, the juvenile told police.

Around 11 p.m., the teen told police, he and Hopkins saw "these two guys wearing robes" on Carpenter. The suspect told police that he struck the man from behind until he fell, and Hopkins punched Sheikh.

"The guy that I hit looked like he was about to die or have a heart attack, so I grabbed him and said, 'Calm down, just listen to us,' " the boy said. "He began screaming about his brother **in** his own language."

The suspects found no money and fled, police said.

The attacks have caused a general fear among Muslims from South Asia, according to Haaris Ahmad, executive director of the Michigan office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Ahmad arranged a community meeting with police officials Thursday night at the Masjid al-Falah mosque **in** hopes of easing fears that ethnic hatred prompted the attacks.

"There is no clear evidence one way or another-- evidence that it could have been a bias-related crime," Ahmad said.

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Caption: Photo

Muhammad Anwar Sheikh, 69, was killed after leaving a mosque.

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