

## **High School Student Charged After Police Encounter Near School Grounds (Mock Trial Case Study)**

**January 29, 2026**

A mock criminal trial held on January 29, 2026, drew attention to the legal boundaries of police authority, use of force, and student rights following an after-school arrest near Street Law High School (SLHS) last November. The incident later became the subject of criminal charges and a closely watched mock trial examining how such encounters unfold under legal scrutiny.

The case stems from an incident on November 27, 2025, when SLHS operated on a half-day schedule ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. School administrators had previously requested increased police patrols after reporting repeated incidents of harassment and vandalism by non-students near school property. Officers Kiana Bates and Theresa Major were assigned to patrol the area during dismissal hours.

At approximately 3:30 p.m., the officers observed two teenagers, later identified as SLHS students Andrew Madison and James Lincoln, standing on the corner of Equality Street and Hope Avenue adjacent to the school. Madison was smoking, and neither student was carrying a backpack. After initially passing by without incident, the officers returned following what they described as a loud interaction between the students and other youths.

Police witnesses testified that the officers approached Madison and Lincoln and requested identification. When the students did not immediately comply, Officer Bates warned that they could be arrested. Bates testified that Madison then reached into his pocket, at which point she saw a “shiny object” she believed to be a knife and immediately attempted to disarm him. A physical struggle followed.

Both Madison and Officer Bates were injured during the encounter. Madison suffered a cut to his leg and a broken wrist, while Bates sustained a cut to her arm. It is undisputed that the injuries were caused by a Swiss Army-style pocketknife carried by Madison. Madison was restrained, handcuffed, and placed in a patrol vehicle, and Lincoln was also detained.

At the police station, officers learned that both individuals were students at SLHS who had attended a school pageant earlier that afternoon. Madison’s parents later sought medical treatment for his injuries and filed a civilian complaint alleging excessive use of force. Officer Bates subsequently filed criminal charges against Madison, including assault on a police officer, assault and battery, and disorderly conduct. Bates was removed from active duty pending an internal investigation.

On January 29, 2026, the trial began with opening statements from the prosecution and the Defense. Officer Bates was called first to testify, followed by Peter Carter, Marcia Snow, Officer Major, and finally Andrew Madison.

Testimony revealed sharply conflicting accounts of the incident. In her testimony, Officer Bates said Madison did not identify himself as a student, refused to drop the knife, and resisted disarming efforts for several minutes. She acknowledged, however, that she assumed Madison and Lincoln were non-students and could not clearly recall whether she advised Madison of his constitutional rights at the time of arrest. Under cross-examination, Bates admitted that she immediately grabbed Madison's arm when he reached into his pocket and did not first instruct him to remove his hand or drop any object.

Officer Major generally supported Bates' account but added important qualifications. Major testified that she initially believed Madison was reaching for his wallet, did not see a knife at the outset, and did not personally perceive the situation as threatening. She confirmed that Bates acted quickly and that no verbal commands were given before physical force was used.

Carter, an SLHS counselor and head of the Peer Mediation Program, testified that Madison had shown genuine behavioural improvement, reduced disciplinary incidents, and developed conflict-resolution skills. By contrast, another counselor, Snow, described Madison as intelligent but historically disrespectful toward authority, though she conceded on cross-examination that she was not involved in the peer mediation program and had no direct knowledge of his recent conduct.

The Defense presented testimony from Madison. Madison testified that he was reaching for his school identification, not a weapon, and that the knife which attached to his wallet, opened accidentally during the officer's grab. He stated that officers approached aggressively, assumed he was a non-student, and ignored his repeated complaints of injury during the arrest. Madison denied any intent to assault the officer and emphasized his efforts at personal and academic improvement since transferring to SLHS.

After closing statements and jury deliberation, a split verdict was returned. Jurors found Madison not guilty of assault on a police officer and assault and battery, concluding that the prosecution had not proven beyond a reasonable doubt that he intentionally used force against Officer Bates. The jury found Madison guilty of disorderly conduct, determining that his behaviour at the scene met the statutory threshold for a breach of the peace.

The jury's split verdict illustrates the difficulty of proving intent in rapidly unfolding police encounters. While jurors were not convinced that Madison deliberately assaulted the officer, they accepted that his conduct contributed to the escalation of the situation. The outcome highlights how criminal liability and police accountability can be assessed differently within the same event.

Legal observers note that encounters between police and students in public spaces near schools occupy a legally sensitive area. While schools may request heightened police presence for safety reasons, students outside school buildings remain protected by ordinary rules of criminal procedure. The case demonstrates how quickly a routine police encounter can evolve into complex questions of detention, proportional force, and

student rights. It therefore raised important questions about when police questioning becomes detention, what level of suspicion is required to justify an arrest for disorderly conduct, how lawful possession of an object may affect police perception, and how rapidly officers may escalate to physical force during investigative encounters.

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