

Dwyane Wade mourns cousin, urges tougher gun laws in Chicago

By Tim Reynolds, Associated Press on 09.07.16

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Dwyane Wade, then with the Miami Heat, during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Florida, January 4, 2013, against the Chicago Bulls. The Bulls won 96-89. Wade is now with the Bulls. Photo: AP Photo/J Pat Carter

Dwyane Wade lashed out against Chicago's gun laws, calling them weak and saying he has urged city officials in his hometown to enact changes to help both citizens and police.

The Chicago Bulls star also said his children are afraid of police officers the same way he was when he was growing up and that prisons need to better rehabilitate inmates. He added that he was left with "a bad taste" in his mouth when Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump tweeted about the murder of his cousin last week.

Wade spoke to ABC News in an interview broadcast Friday, one day before the funeral of his cousin Nykea Aldridge, who was shot in Chicago.

"For our family, it was very tough," Wade said. "The headlines alone — mother walking down the street, registering her kids in school, a mother of four gets murdered — it's tough to deal with."

Aldridge was one of 90 people murdered in August alone in Chicago, a city that has been ravaged by gun violence. Wade is returning to Chicago this season after spending the first 13 years of his pro career starring for the Miami Heat.

"My purpose for being back in the city is bigger than basketball," Wade said. "Basketball is a big part of it, of course. It's what I do for a living. But I think my purpose at the end of the day is hopefully to come to Chicago and be a part and be the voice that can help bring people together."

Aldridge, 32, was pushing her baby in a stroller near a school where she'd planned to register her children when she was shot in the head and arm. She wasn't the intended target, police said.

Chicago — where police say 5,900 illegal guns have been confiscated this year already — once had some of the nation's strictest gun-control laws, but many are no longer on the books. Chicago police have said a fifth of the guns used in crimes in the city come in from neighboring Indiana.

"They are fighting a war," Wade said of Chicago police. "And they can do a lot better, but they can get more help as well to do better. There's other cities that have way tougher gun laws. We have weak gun laws."

Two brothers who were on parole for prior criminal activity have been charged with first-degree murder in Aldridge's death. Darwin Sorrells Jr., 26, and Derren Sorrells, 22, are being held without bail.

"Guys go to prison and then we let them back out on the street, they're going to go back to what they're used to and what they know," Wade said, noting that some members of his family have already forgiven the accused shooters. "So if there's something we can do with the prison that can help with work programs when people come out, it gives them an opportunity to try to help themselves."

Wade has spoken on social issues several times in the past, and said the three boys he's raising — two sons and a cousin — are old enough to understand the issues.

"My boys are afraid of police just the same way I was when I was growing up," Wade said. "Not all police, obviously. But my boys hear everything that's going on in the world, all the harassment, all the murders that's going on and they pose the question back to me. And what answer do I have for them?"

Wade continues to have partnerships with law enforcement. On Sept. 17, he will hold an event in Miami to promote cycling safety and unity in the community — and City of Miami police officers plan to join Wade on the six-mile bike ride.

Trump tweeted about Aldridge's killing a day after the shooting, first saying that such a matter will have black voters backing his campaign and later adding his condolences to Wade's family. Wade said Trump's tweets left him conflicted.

"On one end, your cousin's death is used as a ploy for political gain," Wade said. "On the other end, it's a national story. It goes back to that for me. I want eyes on this city. I want us to be able to do more together. The only way we can do more together is if more people know what's going on."

Quiz

- 1 Which of the following statements accurately summarizes the relationship between the article's CENTRAL ideas?
- (A) Wade is concerned that Chicago's gun laws are too weak to prevent crime; he believes that police officers are doing nothing to keep the people safe.
 - (B) Wade has returned to Chicago to play for the Bulls after spending 13 years with the Miami Heat; he is concerned about his family's safety in Chicago.
 - (C) Wade feels personally affected by gun violence in Chicago; he wants to use his fame from basketball to help strengthen gun laws.
 - (D) Wade's family has been affected by the recent increase in gun violence in Chicago; he is upset with Trump's views on the issue.
- 2 Which of the following sentences is MOST important to include in an accurate and objective summary of the article?
- (A) Dwyane Wade lashed out against Chicago's gun laws, calling them weak and saying he has urged city officials in his hometown to enact changes to help both citizens and police.
 - (B) "For our family, it was very tough," Wade said. "The headlines alone — mother walking down the street, registering her kids in school, a mother of four gets murdered — it's tough to deal with."
 - (C) Chicago — where police say 5,900 illegal guns have been confiscated this year already — once had some of the nation's strictest gun-control laws, but many are no longer on the books.
 - (D) Trump tweeted about Aldridge's killing a day after the shooting, first saying that such a matter will have black voters backing his campaign and later adding his condolences to Wade's family.
- 3 According to the article, Wade believes that each of the following will help reduce gun violence EXCEPT:
- (A) imposing stricter gun laws in cities where gun laws are weak
 - (B) requiring police officers to take more initiative in keeping guns out of Chicago
 - (C) raising awareness about the number of people affected by gun violence
 - (D) developing work programs to help rehabilitate inmates in preparation for their release from prison

- 4 What was the MOST effective way the author developed the idea that the gun laws in Chicago are weak?
- (A) by telling the personal story of Nykea Aldridge's death
 - (B) by including personal quotes about Wade's children
 - (C) by describing the tweets sent out by presidential candidate Donald Trump
 - (D) by outlining statistics that show gun violence is widespread in Chicago