



NEWS RELEASE

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Multiple Arrests, Charges Made After Welcome Weekend Fight Near Downtown East Lansing Restaurant

ELPD releases police bodycam video of widely publicized fight

25-185

Sept. 26, 2025

EAST LANSING, Mich. — In the wake of multiple arrests and criminal charges after a Welcome Weekend fight outside of a downtown East Lansing restaurant, the East Lansing Police Department (ELPD) today released four police bodycam videos related to the incident.

As a result of the fight outside Dave's Hot Chicken, 194 Albert Ave., in the early morning hours of Sunday, Aug. 24, ELPD arrested the following men:

- Lonnie Smith, 21, of Okemos, was charged with disturbing the public peace by engaging in a fight or brawl in a public space and issued a citation for misdemeanor Disorderly Fighting.
- Mason Woods, 22, of East Lansing, was charged with disturbing the public peace by fighting in a public space and resisting or obstructing a police officer in the performance of lawful duties. He was later issued citations for misdemeanor Disorderly Fighting and misdemeanor Resist, Hinder and Obstruct.

Both Smith and Woods have pretrial dates scheduled next month, with Smith's on Oct. 2 and Woods' on Oct. 23.

No Michigan State University students were arrested in the incident. The video footage was released today after the ELPD decided to end its investigation into

Fight Arrests - continued

the fight.

BACKGROUND OF INCIDENT

This incident was one of 52 service calls the East Lansing Police Department (ELPD) responded to late Saturday night into the early Sunday morning of Michigan State University's Welcome Weekend. During that weekend, authorities arrested 10 individuals, eight of whom were not Michigan State University students.

This incident occurred outside Dave's Hot Chicken at approximately 1:39 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 24.

Several ELPD officers responded to a crowd where they observed physical violence occurring between Smith and Woods.

Officers issued multiple loud verbal commands in an effort to disperse the crowd and deescalate the situation. Despite these repeated lawful orders, Smith and Woods continued to ignore them and actively engage in physical altercations. In response to the violent commotion, an officer deployed Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray, a nonlethal tool designed to deescalate the disorder and halt further fighting.

Smith and Woods were then arrested, charged with misdemeanors and taken to the East Lansing jail.

While there, both men received medical attention from ELPD medics, including Sudecon wipes, an irritant spray decontamination tool.

Smith was held until sober and released later that day, while Woods was transported to a hospital due to alcohol incapacitation.

ELPD RELEASES BODYCAM FOOTAGE

The investigation into this incident is now complete. City attorneys and Police Chief Jennifer Brown have released four bodycam recordings from the four responding officers.

Please note that when an officer turns on their body-worn camera, the video begins recording right away. However, the audio does not begin until two minutes later. This is because the cameras are designed with a short video buffer that captures silent footage leading up to the moment of activation. This feature helps provide context for what happened just before the camera was turned on.

WHERE TO FIND THE VIDEOS

The four body-worn camera videos can be viewed at:

1. <https://youtu.be/hlPzsdRgzho>

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2. <https://youtu.be/ts5KPds3K5E>
3. <https://youtu.be/2EQQ3oqmv6U>
4. <https://youtu.be/1GTGVY8jfzA>

Statement from ELPD Chief Jennifer Brown: "As downtown activity swells each weekend this fall, our ELPD officers are working to proactively protect and save lives. Our officers have been doing their jobs to prevent assaults, stop fights, safely disperse large crowds and respond to other emergencies in an effort to keep our community safe.

"We continue working closely with prosecutors to evaluate evidence and consider charges against additional individuals who participated in violence that night, and others. We also ask the public for assistance in this process. We will continue to have a strong presence downtown to deter actions that would endanger lives.

"The East Lansing Police Department takes all use of force incidents seriously. Per policy, this incident was thoroughly reviewed through internal investigative procedures.

"We recognize the public's concern regarding use of force incidents. Transparency and accountability are priorities for our agency, and we are committed to keeping the community informed as appropriate."

ELPD plans to release videos related to other incidents as ongoing investigations and prosecutions conclude.

Anyone who can identify individuals involved with violence during the weekend of Saturday Aug. 23, and Sunday Aug. 24, should contact ELPD Detective Austin Nelson at (517) 898-2160 or ANelson@cityofeastlansing.com.

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