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### ► Haverhill

# River St. murder suspect released

## One of 2 charged in deadly home invasion

By MIKE LABELLA  
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HAVERHILL — One of two men charged with murdering two men during a home invasion on River Street this summer has been released from jail.

Jonas Rogers, 25, of Haverhill, was released on personal recognizance yesterday, as the Essex County District Attorney's office asked the court for more time to present evidence to a grand jury seeking an indictment against him.



Jonas Rogers

Juan Carlos Sanchez, the other man charged in the July 23 deaths of Billy Melchionda, 19, of Haverhill, and Anndy Guzman, 20, of Lawrence, remains behind bars. Both Sanchez and Rogers are charged with two counts of murder.

Rogers' lawyer Arthur L. Kelly said he can only assume that the evidence presented to date before the grand jury was favorable to his client, which he said in turn resulted in his unexpected release yesterday, pending the outcome of the grand jury proceedings. He called it "highly unusual

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## ROGERS: 'Highly unusual' release for city man

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for someone charged in a double homicide" to be released before the grand jury indicts.

"Mr. Rogers has always professed his innocence with regard to this incident," Kelly said. "Several of his family members and friends were elated at his release, as he was ... We are awaiting resolution of the case as the charges are still pending."

The Essex County District Attorney's office could not be reached for comment.

Melchionda and Guzman were shot to death July 23 during a home invasion at Melchionda's apartment at 629-635 River St. Guzman,

who police say was with Sanchez and Rogers during the invasion, was shot to death when Melchionda and Sanchez struggled over the gun, police said.

Sanchez was arraigned July 30 in Haverhill District Court, where he pleaded not guilty to charges that included two counts of murder. Judge Patricia Dowling ordered Sanchez held without bail on a previous,

drug-related probation violation and continued the shooting case.

Rogers was arraigned Aug. 1 on the same charges as Sanchez and was also ordered held without bail.

Also charged in connection with the case are Melchionda's upstairs neighbors, Joshua Cloutman, 20, and Angela Walsh, 21. Both face charges of accessory before the fact in

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Jonas Rogers' lawyer Arthur L. Kelly

the home invasion and misleading a police investigation. Police allege Cloutman and Walsh helped set up the home invasion in exchange for marijuana.

Sanchez' lawyer Ronald Ranta said the court previously approved a request for cash to hire a private investigator.

"We are still waiting to see what evidence they have against our client, which is hindering the defendant's opportunity to investigate," Ranta said.

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