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Turning Point USA Rep Attacked by Man With Cane at UT Tyler

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Y'all don't deserve this."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

A man wearing a wizard hat and a cape attacked a Turning Point USA field representative and two students with a prop cane at the University of Texas at Tyler on Tuesday, 10 November 2026. He tore down an American flag first, threw it on the ground, and told the students: "Y'all don't deserve this." Campus police arrested him, and he now faces two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

The man was later identified as 19-year-old Ciro Stephen Tomlian of Jacksonville, Texas. He was not a student at the university. He had walked up to a campus event called "Pick Up the Mic," an open dialogue gathering created in honour of assassinated Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk, and turned it into a crime scene.

Video of the incident shows the whole thing. Tomlian, a man with long hair, snatched the flag from its stand near the Turning Point USA table and tossed it to the ground. When other students confronted him, he threatened them with his prop cane, called them "fascist pieces of s-" and made obscene gestures.

Then he swung the cane. He struck the legs of one man at the event, and swung at a person off-camera, before a school official rushed in and broke up the fight. A University of Texas at Tyler police officer arrived, disarmed Tomlian and placed him in handcuffs. As he was led away, Tomlian was heard saying: "I apologize, officer."

Ciro Tomlian UT Tyler Cane Attack November 10

No injuries were reported, according to Turning Point USA's Frontlines account. That is the one piece of good news in the story, and it matters, because the video looks worse than the outcome. Three people were struck in total: the field representative and two students.

Tomlian was arrested on Wednesday by the University of Texas at Tyler Police Department. Smith County Jail records show he has been charged with two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and one count of assault causing bodily injury. The charges are allegations, and he is presumed innocent unless the state proves them in court.

University President Dr. Julie V. Philley released a statement to students after the arrest. "Everyone has the right to free speech, and violence will not be tolerated at this university," she said. She also confirmed that Tomlian was not enrolled at UT Tyler at the time of the incident.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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