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Man Who Shot and Killed Victim While Attempting to Rob Victim's Gold Chain Pleads Guilty; Sentencing Scheduled for January

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Menelik Petersen By. The Virgin Islands Police Department

The V.I. Department of Justice announced late Thursday said that a St. Croix man who was facing criminal charges for killing Terrance Moorehead in 2015, confessed to the crime by pleading guilty moments before trial was to begin in the V.I. Superior Court, and he is scheduled to be sentenced on January 29, 2020.

Menelik Petersen, 25, agreed to plead guilty to second-degree murder [for the April 11, 2015 killing of Mr. Moorehead of Pepper Tree Terrace.](#)

Jury selection began on Monday, November 18. Trial was scheduled to begin on Wednesday.

Mr. Petersen entered the plea moments before trial was scheduled to start on Wednesday. He appeared for the hearing before Judge Douglas A. Brady who asked Mr. Petersen questions to assure the court that his plea was voluntary before accepting the plea. The People of the V.I. were represented by DOJ Prosecutor, Chief Deputy Attorney General Joseph Ponteen.

According to the affidavit of Det. Leon Cruz, Mr. Moorehead was shot at about 2:00 a.m. outside of Super Tanker Service Gas Station in Sunny Isle after making a purchase at the store and returning to his white Dodge truck. Shortly after, he ran back into the store saying he had been shot, before being transported to the Juan Luis Hospital where he died from a single gunshot wound to the right shoulder. Surveillance footage, statements, Forensic and Medical information showed that Mr. Petersen discharged a single shot at Moorehead during a struggle while attempting to rob him of a gold chain. Mr. Petersen then jumped back in the rear seat of a black 2012 Ford Escape driven by Kenyatta Milligan and drove off.

“Terry”, as Mr. Moorehead was affectionately called, grew up in Sion Farm, St. Croix. Family members say the 55-year-old was looking forward and counting down the days to retirement from many years of Government Service. He is described as a wonderful brother, a great friend, a generous uncle, cousin and a friendly face around town. Friends and family say he was a remarkable, kind and generous man. His best quality was making people laugh. V.I. Attorney General Denise George said, “It is especially difficult to lose a loved one to such senseless and random violence. I just hope that this outcome can give Mr. Moorhead’s loved ones some comfort and solace.”

Mr. Petersen was arrested in 2016 and remains jailed pending his sentencing in January 2020. He faces not less than five years to any number of years in jail for this crime since there is no maximum term of incarceration for second-degree murder.