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## Motions Target Judge's Past Ties and Sentencing Timeline After Jean-Baptiste Conviction

Defense attorney Kye Walker filed motions arguing Judge Ross-Edwards should step aside due to her firm's past ties to the victim's family and that sentencing was scheduled prematurely before post-trial motions could be heard.

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Daryl Jean-Baptiste, seen in the Superior Court parking lot, faces up to five years in prison after a jury convicted him of involuntary manslaughter on Wednesday for a 2019 fatal car crash, following roughly two hours and 45 minutes of deliberation. By. WTJX.

ST. CROIX — Following his [July conviction](#) for involuntary manslaughter in the [2019 crash](#) that killed 24-year-old Davindra Ramsundar Jr., defendant Daryl Jean-Baptiste is now challenging the

trial court's handling of his case. His attorney, Kye Walker, filed two motions this week asking the Superior Court to reconsider recent rulings — one denying a bid to disqualify the judge, and another that set a sentencing date before post-trial motions could be heard.

In the first motion, filed August 28, Walker argued that Judge Yvette Ross-Edwards should have been disqualified because her former law firm represented the Ramsundar family in a pending wrongful death lawsuit against Jean-Baptiste arising from the same crash. Walker contended that even if the judge had no direct involvement, the firm's past representation raises questions about impartiality and could create an appearance of bias.

Walker further asserted that the court applied the wrong legal standard in denying disqualification earlier this month. She said the judge relied on a subjective review of her own impartiality, rather than the "objective standard" required under Virgin Islands law and U.S. Supreme Court precedent. The motion also accuses the court of mischaracterizing the timing of the original filing, stating that the request was submitted a week after the jury's guilty verdict, not "minutes" afterward as the court suggested.

In addition, Walker argued that the issue of judicial bias is not one that can be waived, especially now that the judge is the sole arbiter of post-trial motions and sentencing. She cited case law emphasizing that a defendant has a fundamental right to a fair tribunal, and asked the court to reconsider in light of what she described as clear errors of law and fact.

The second motion, filed August 29, challenges the court's August 12 order that scheduled sentencing and directed the probation office to prepare a presentence report. Walker said this order was premature, as the court had not yet acted on Jean-Baptiste's pending and unopposed request for more time to file post-trial motions. She explained that transcripts were not delivered until August 21, meaning the defense could not reasonably prepare the necessary filings by the original deadline.

According to Walker, moving forward with sentencing before those motions are considered would impair Jean-Baptiste's ability to seek post-conviction relief and preserve issues for appeal. "The sentencing of Mr. Jean-Baptiste without first giving him the opportunity to pursue post-trial motions constitutes manifest injustice," the filing states.

Both motions cite Virgin Islands rules that allow reconsideration to correct clear error of law or address issues that were overlooked by the court. Walker requested that the judge revisit her earlier rulings, allow time for post-trial motions to be heard, and step aside from further involvement in the case.

Jean-Baptiste, 26, was found guilty on July 23 of involuntary manslaughter but acquitted of negligent homicide by means of a motor vehicle. He faces a maximum of five years in prison if the conviction stands.