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VIDOJ No Longer Seeks Pretrial Detention for Brian Schooler After Fatal WMJR Service Station Shooting

Prosecutors moved to withdraw their request to detain Brian Schooler before trial, saying they need time to gather evidence and obtain forensic testing, after witnesses told police he opened fire on Pedro Melendez Sanes at WMJR Service Station on Friday.

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Mugshot of Brian Schooler. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. CROIX — Prosecutors are no longer asking the court to detain Brian Schooler pending trial, even as he remains accused in the shooting death of Pedro Melendez Sanes at WMJR Service Station on Friday.

Schooler was arrested on charges of first-degree murder, first-degree assault, reckless endangerment, and discharging or aiming a firearm after the fatal shooting of Melendez Sanes.

According to police, ShotSpotter first alerted authorities to the incident after detecting 15 rounds fired at the WMJR Service Station in Castle Coakley. When officers arrived, a woman reportedly pointed to Schooler and identified him as the shooter.

A second individual approached police and said he had secured Schooler's gun, also reportedly identifying him as the person who shot Melendez Sanes. Police found Melendez Sanes lying face down near the gas station's eastern corner, unresponsive, with a vehicle a few feet away. The vehicle's driver's side door was still open.

The firearm secured at the scene was identified by police as a .40 caliber Glock 22. The man who turned over the gun also told officers that Schooler is a licensed firearm owner.

Police also spoke with a gas station attendant who was on duty at the time of the shooting. According to court documents, the attendant reportedly told officers that Melendez Sanes approached the entrance to the gas station unarmed and alone. The attendant also reportedly saw Schooler approach Melendez Sanes and open fire multiple times without any exchange of words.

A passerby who was stopped in traffic also reportedly saw Schooler shoot Melendez Sanes, first twice, and then additional times after the injured man fell to the ground, according to documents submitted to the court.

After his arrest, Schooler reportedly declined to provide a statement to police.

Public court records do not disclose the outcome of Monday's advice of rights hearing. It is therefore not currently clear which of the charges listed in public filings — first-degree murder, first-, second-, and third-degree assault, simple assault and battery, first-degree reckless endangerment, and discharging or aiming a firearm — were upheld by Magistrate Yolán Brow Ross.

However, after Schooler's first court appearance, the V.I. Department of Justice filed a motion asking to withdraw its request to detain him pending trial.

"The People do not wish to proceed to an expedited trial due to the need to gather all the appropriate evidence and obtain sufficient forensic testing of the evidence," prosecutors said.

The government said it will not object to Schooler being granted pretrial release.

Magistrate Brow Ross has scheduled a hearing for Wednesday morning to consider the matter.