

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Twist, A Man Said To Be Twice Arrested In Connection With Lesha Lammy Was Introduced At Opening Day Of Trial; Prosecution Says Williams Killed Officers After Being Rejected

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ST. CROIX -- Judge Harold Willocks on Monday heard opening arguments of what is arguably one of the territory's most high-profile and watched double homicide cases, the Government of the Virgin Islands v. Francis Williams. Both sides sought to set the tone for the direction they intend to take their respective arguments: the government attempting to paint a picture that puts Mr. Williams -- accused of killing officers Lesha Lammy and Kai Javois -- as committing the crime under a rage of hurt after being rejected by Ms. Lammy, and the defense, working to dismantle the government's

argument as mostly conjectural, while bringing other individuals into the picture that the defense contends should have been investigated with the same effort and resources the government placed into proving Mr. Williams's guilt.

Judge Willocks, after a jury selection process, took a recess and called the court to order. The government, represented by Attorney Nadja Harrigan, an assistant counsel of the prosecution, opened by quoting words said to be of Mr. Williams when he was initially approached by the V.I.P.D. relative to the killings: "Why you blaming me? I ain't do nothing to her." Ms. Harrigan argued that a man scorned is worse than a woman scorned, as the level of rejection the man feels from a woman who no longer wants him goes deep. Ms. Lammy, she told the jury, had been in an off-and-on relationship with Mr. Williams for two years, and she decided to end the relationship with Mr. Williams in June 2016. She argued that the breakup was harder for Mr. Williams to accept because he perceived that Ms. Lammy left him for another police officer, Mr. Javois, who was 9 years Mr. Williams's junior relative to time served in the police force.

What followed the breakup, the government argued, was erratic behavior from Mr. Williams -- from appearing at Ms. Lammy's home late at night, to going to speak to Ms. Lammy's mother, to assaulting Ms. Lammy at Chris Hideaway, a nightclub and sports bar, and even after the constant rejection, a marriage proposal that Ms. Lammy also rejected. Mr. Williams, the government also argued, had visited Carambola Hotel where Ms. Lammy and Mr. Javois were spending time, managed to get the hotel room's key from an employee there that he knew, and tried opening the door of the room that Ms. Lammy and Mr. Javois were believed to be in. The key did not work and Mr. Williams left, the government said.



Late Officer Lesha Lammy

Then on August 10, Ms. Lammy and Mr. Javois headed to Hams Bluff beach to spend some time. Hams Bluff is located north all the way past the crusher in Frederiksted. Before they left, Ms. Lammy dropped off her three children to her ex-husband. Yet even after the constant rejection from Ms. Lammy, the erratic behavior from Mr. Williams continued, the government argued. Before Ms. Lammy and Mr. Javois left Ms. Lammy's

home for Hams Bluff, Mr. Williams showed up at the house -- using a police cruiser, according to a police statement -- and attempted to block the two from leaving. They managed to maneuver around the police cruiser and left.

Mr. Williams, the government said, then dropped his partner off to the Ancilmo Marshall Command in Estate La Reine, and said he was going to pick up food at the La Reine Chicken Shack. He then went to change for his next job, a security moonlight, which usually takes him about half an hour to prepare for, but on August 10 took him 1.5 hours, the government argued.

Ms. Lammy and her boyfriend, Mr. Javois, did not report to duty following their visit to Hams Bluff. They were found the next day, August 11, at Hams Bluff dead -- Ms. Lammy on some rocks, and Mr. Javois near his White Jeep. They had been shot about 8 times.



Late Officer Kai Javois

It was then that officers went to Mr. Williams's home, where he told police: "Why you blaming me? I ain't do nothing to her," according to the government.

"Hell has no fury like a man scorned," Ms. Harrigan said, her gaze set on the jury. "He [Francis Williams] could not stand that Lesha had moved on and refused his marriage proposal."

The defense

Gordon Rhea, the attorney representing Mr. Williams, opened by stating that the case "is like a coin, it has two sides. As the case evolves, you could end up with a different ending." Addressing the jury, he said that the incident had been widely covered by the media, and asked that comments made about the case -- including The Consortium's platforms where many have shared their opinions -- not be used as part of their conclusions. Instead, only evidence presented at the trial should go into a juror's own deliberations, he said.

Mr. Rhea acknowledged that the crime was a tragedy, and said whoever was responsible should be brought to justice. But, he added, another tragedy would be to put an innocent man in jail.



Former Officer Francis Williams

In building his case, Mr. Rhea -- his soft gaze on the jury -- said, "You're going to hear about another man who had twice been arrested," and on whom "there was a restraining order," in connection with Ms. Lammy. While Mr. Gordon did not reveal the man's identity -- he said it would be revealed during proceedings -- today was the first that the public learned of another man who had to be blocked by court order from trying to see Ms. Lammy.

Additionally, Mr. Rhea said, Mr. Javois was living with another woman while he was seeing Ms. Lammy. "You will hear about other persons," Mr. Ray said, making known that other names would be revealed throughout the proceedings as he develops his client's case of innocence. "Several people had motives or reasons to be angry at Lesha or Kai," he said.

The double homicide, Mr. Rhea said, was gruesome. The victims had been shot a total of eight times; Ms. Lammy's body appeared to have been dragged across some rocks; and

gasoline was poured on the bodies. He said with the government's investigation fixated on Mr. Williams, V.I.P.D. investigators immediately came for Mr. Williams's vehicle, clothing, shoes. However, after thorough tests performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the results showed no trace of Mr. Williams's involvement, Mr. Rhea said.

Furthermore, investigators were also able to retrieve video from cameras that have view of the road leading to Hams Bluff. There is no other entrance other than the main road that vehicles traverse, Mr. Rhea said. "Mr. Williams never showed up; his vehicle never showed up," he said.

Mr. Rhea said some fingerprints of Mr. Williams were found on Mr. Javois's vehicle on the crime scene. However, Mr. Rhea added, Mr. Williams and Mr. Javois had known each other, had worked together and had been around each other quite often.

"Follow just the evidence," Mr. Rhea kindly asked the jury.

The case continues Tuesday.

Correction: May 14, 2019

A previous version of this story included the wrong spelling for the defense attorney. It's Gordon Rhea, not Ray. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.