

EXAM TO BE SOUGHT IN COP KILLING CASE - ATTORNEY SAYS SUSPECT COULD BE MENTALLY ILL

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The attorney for the man accused of gunning down two Detroit police officers said Thursday he is concerned about his client's mental health.

Southfield attorney Kerry Jackson said he plans to ask for a competency examination Monday before a scheduled preliminary hearing in Detroit's 36th District Court for Eric L. Marshall.

Marshall, 23, of Detroit is charged with two counts of first-degree murder in connection with the Feb. 16 shooting deaths of Detroit Police Officers Jennifer Fettig, 26, and Matthew Bowens, 21, during a traffic stop.

"I met with him last week, and I can say that if you had seen him, the first thing you would have thought was that there are some mental health issues which need to be explored by a professional," Jackson said. "There may be some paranoid-schizophrenic issues going on."

Jackson said the hearing will be postponed if a judge grants his request for a competency examination.

If granted, Marshall will be examined by state doctors at the state Forensic Center in Ypsilanti.

"We need to know if he's level-headed enough to know what's going on and what he's facing," Jackson said.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Robert Moran said Thursday that the competency request is routine.

"It happens all the time," he said.

Marshall is accused of opening fire on the officers after a traffic stop on Gilbert in southwest Detroit. Police said Marshall approached the police car on foot and opened fire through the driver's side of the car, possibly wounding Bowens.

He then approached the passenger's side and shot Fettig several times, police said.

Marshall fled but returned while Bowens was outside of the car assisting Fettig, police said. Bowens was then shot nine times and killed.

Police have said a videotape from the officers' patrol car is fuzzy and did not capture much of the incident.

Jackson said he's eager to see the tape.

"It's clear to me that the police are not telling us everything that happened in that police stop," he said. "I'd like to hear some more information from some of the witnesses about who did the shooting, how and why."

Jackson also said he's learned that Marshall had been severely depressed since his mother's death in November.

"Basically, in his family's words, he's been spaced out and depressed," Jackson said. "He's had no mental health counseling, so I don't yet know what the full extent of it is."

Bowens' father, James Bowens, laughed in disgust when informed of Jackson's strategy for Monday.

"To me, it's a cop out when you murder two people and aren't man enough to admit it," he said.

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