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Jason Billingsley raped, set two on fire before killing Baltimore tech CEO

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BALTIMORE (AP) — The man accused of killing Baltimore tech entrepreneur Pava LaPere last week and committing a rape and arson days earlier will be held without bail pending trial in those cases, a judge ruled Friday.

Jason Billingsley, who is **charged with first-degree murder in LaPere's death**, was released from prison last October after serving a shortened sentence for a 2013 rape because he earned good behavior credits behind bars. He is also charged with two dozen counts in a Sept. 19 rape in which a woman and man were bound with duct tape before being set on fire, and police had been actively searching for him since then.



Jason Billingsley (Baltimore City Police Department)

Police believe **LaPere was killed** Friday night, although her body wasn't discovered until after someone reported her missing Monday morning. LaPere, who founded the tech startup EcoMap Technologies from her dorm room at Johns Hopkins University, died from strangulation and blunt force trauma, court records show.

During a bail review hearing Friday morning in Baltimore District Court, the judge said she considered Billingsley's criminal history and the fact that he's facing multiple violent crime and sexual offense charges.

"I do believe you are a flight risk and extreme danger to public safety," Judge Tameika Lunn told Billingsley, who appeared virtually via video conference from jail.



People become emotional while attending a vigil in memory of Pava LaPere, founder of tech startup EcoMap Technologies, on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023, in Baltimore. Loved ones and friends are remembering the slain Baltimore tech entrepreneur for her compassion and dedication to helping others. Baltimore police found 26-year-old Pava LaPere dead from blunt force trauma in her apartment complex after she was reported missing late Monday morning. (AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough)

Lunn also said she would order a suicide risk assessment. She said Billingsley, 32, would have no possibility for home detention in any of his cases, which include a recent stolen firearm charge as well as failing to properly register as a sex offender in addition to the murder and attempted-murder cases.

Assistant State's Attorney Robin Wherley said Billingsley admitted assaulting LaPere.

"He did give a statement indicating that he did beat the victim with a brick and his hands," she said. "It's a heinous case."

She also called the Sept. 19 arson and rape case "extremely disturbing."

Billingsley's public defender, Jason Rodriguez, said he didn't wish to present an argument on the bail issue. He also declined to comment on

his way out of court.

LaPere's killing marked an exceedingly rare random homicide in a city that has made notable progress in reversing its murder rate over the past several months. So far in 2023, Baltimore homicides are down about 18% compared with this time last year.

LaPere, who was named to Forbes' 30 under 30 list for social impact earlier this year, was remembered at a vigil Wednesday as someone who remained focused on building community and using entrepreneurship to create meaningful social change even as her national profile rose.

Police have said there's no reason to believe LaPere knew Billingsley.

According to Billingsley's arrest warrant, LaPere's partially clothed body was found on the roof of her downtown Baltimore apartment building. Surveillance footage shows LaPere arriving home Friday night and sitting on a couch in the lobby when Billingsley approached the building and waved her over to the glass door, police said. She opened the door and started talking to him, and they were seen getting on the elevator together, according to the warrant.



Frank LaPere, Nico LaPere and Caroline Frank, the family of Pava LaPere, founder of tech startup EcoMap Technologies, speak during a vigil on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023, in Baltimore. Loved ones are remembering the slain Baltimore tech entrepreneur for her compassion and dedication to helping others. Baltimore police found 26-year-old Pava LaPere dead from blunt force trauma in her apartment complex after she was reported missing late Monday morning. (AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough)

Billingsley was then seen "scrambling for an exit" less than an hour later and wiping his hand on his shorts before leaving the apartment building, police said.

In the Sept. 19 rape and arson, police say Billingsley gained entry into the building by identifying himself as a maintenance worker. According to the warrant, he pointed a gun at a woman inside and used duct-tape to restrain her and her boyfriend. He then raped the woman several times and slit her throat with a knife before dousing both victims in liquid and setting them on fire, leaving them with serious burns, police wrote.

Officers found a backpack and other items in the bushes outside the house, including duct tape, a bleach container, gas can and lighter, the warrant says.

Baltimore acting police Commissioner Richard Worley said earlier this week that Billingsley had been firmly on the department's radar since detectives quickly identified him as a suspect in a Sept. 19 case. Worley said officials didn't alert the public at that time because they didn't believe he was committing "random" acts of violence.

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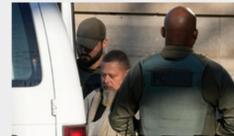
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