

RECOMMENDED

Suspect Jason Billingsley arrested in Baltimore tech CEO's killing

Baltimore police named Jason Billingsley as suspect in killing of Pava LaPere

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BALTIMORE —

Authorities late Wednesday night arrested a man accused of killing a Baltimore tech CEO, according to the U.S. Marshals Service.

Deputy U.S. Marshal Albert Maresca Jr. told 11 News late Wednesday night that Jason Billingsley was arrested at a train station in Bowie, Prince George's County. Acting Baltimore Police Commissioner Richard Worley said at a news conference Thursday morning that SWAT officers arrested Billingsley without incident.

At initial court appearance, judge denies bond

Billingsley, 32, was arrested on first-degree murder and other charges in connection with the killing of Pava LaPere, who **was found dead Monday** at her apartment building in Baltimore. The medical examiner ruled LaPere's death a homicide by strangulation.

Billingsley made a virtual court appearance Friday morning for a bail review involving four separate cases from two jurisdictions — LaPere's killing, an arson and rape on Sept. 19, a gun theft in Baltimore County and a failure to register as a sex offender charge. Billingsley was ordered to remain held without bail.

The state called the Sept. 19 attack "extremely disturbing" and called LaPere's killing "a heinous case," telling the judge that Billingsley allegedly waived his Miranda rights and confessed after the arrest.

Prosecutors told the judge that Billingsley admitted to beating the victim to death "with a brick and his hands." In court, the defense did not ask to be heard on the bond issue. Bot the public defender and assistant state's attorney declined comment outside of court.

Armed, dangerous suspect wanted in tech CEO's killing

According to a court charging document obtained Thursday by 11 News, officers found LaPere's body on the roof of the Mount Vernon apartment building where she lived and had an office.

"It seems that she was probably murdered on Friday night, and it wasn't recovered until they reported her missing on Sunday," Worley said. "We are processing all evidence to determine exactly what occurred. We do know there was no forced entry into the apartment building, as this was a secured building."

Video below: Murder suspect faces judge

The court charging document states that security camera video shows LaPere in the lobby when an unknown man came to the door and waved to her. "The victim opens the lobby door and began to talk to the unknown male ... they get into an elevator together," the document states.

Later, the man is seen on video leaving "by a stairwell scrambling to find an exit" and he was "seen wiping his right hand on his shorts before exiting," the charging document states.

"It is very clear that this individual posed a substantial danger, that he had been noncompliant and was clearly violating the terms of his supervision after being released, and that alone should be enough to make sure that we keep him off the streets," Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott said. "I hope this sends a message to everybody else who likes to commit these kind of cowardly, horrendous acts that we will not tolerate it and we will pull you off the streets of Baltimore."

LaPere was the founder and CEO of EcoMap Technologies. She was listed in the prestigious Forbes "30 Under 30" class of 2023 for social impact. Her family and friends remembered her with a **vigil on Wednesday night**.

How police tracked him down

Speaking to the search for the suspect, Worley said investigators tracked Billingsley's phone, his financial transactions, his social media as well as surveilled his known addresses, spoke with multiple witnesses and listened to numerous jail calls in an effort to find him.

Video below: Thursday's news conference in its entirety

Worley said officers on Monday tracked Billingsley to a close proximity, 88 yards. The commissioner said he delayed a news conference on the case because officers were close to capturing him, but Billingsley eluded authorities.

"As soon as the news conference happened the other day, he basically left the location where he was at. We did a search warrant at one location he had just left because he saw the news conference," Worley said.

The suspect's criminal history

Investigators said Billingsley is also wanted in connection with an **attempted murder, arson and rape** on Sept. 19 on Edmondson Avenue in west Baltimore.

Video below: Man accused of killing CEO has violent history

There were three victims in the Edmondson case, including a child. Police said Billingsley was working as a maintenance man and knew the victims he targeted. Police said investigators knew almost immediately that Billingsley was the suspect, and they were tracking him but did not inform the public about him despite having a warrant out for his arrest for a week.

When asked why the Edmondson case wasn't mentioned at Tuesday's news conference, Worley said: "There were two victims from Edmondson Avenue — one was in the hospital, one was at the location. We had to get them protection. We had to send Anne Arundel County, we had to protect those two victims," Worley said. "Hindsight is always 20/20. If I had known he was going to go kill someone, I would have put the flyer out, but he had no indication he was committing random acts."

| RELATED: The 11 News I-Team examines the suspect's criminal history

Worley said police were trying to protect the victims in the Edmondson arson and rape case, and they worried that Billingsley would go underground, which they said he did.

"Once he saw the press conference for the homicide, we didn't know where he was going to go. We knew several locations where he could go, and we had those all under surveillance and they were actively tracking while we were at the press conference. That's why we delayed the press conference," Worley said. "As soon as we realized there was a public safety (risk), we had the press conference."

After the killing of LaPere, police said they had evidence linking Billingsley to both crimes.

Detectives are now reviewing all cases since October 2022 to determine if he could be connected to any more, according to police.

Why was the suspect on the streets?

No one is alleging the Division of Correction did anything wrong in releasing Billingsley early. The conversation centers around diminution credits, sometimes referred to as "good-time credits."

In 2015, Billingsley had been in prison after pleading guilty to a first-degree sex offense. The mayor at Thursday's news conference said Billingsley should have stayed in prison for previous crimes.

"Rapists shouldn't be let out early, period. When you rape someone ... you should not get out early, period, for that kind of offense," Scott said.

Video: Baltimore CEO murder suspect linked to earlier arson, rape

Baltimore City State's Attorney Ivan Bates said Billingsley's release from prison was a systematic failure.

"The (sentencing) guidelines for that offense are about 15 years to 25 years. He received a sentence of 30 years, suspend all but 14 years, which meant that he would be incarcerated for 14 years," Bates said.

Bates said he did not know why the judge, at that time, imposed a sentence less than the recommended guidelines.

Bates spoke to prisoners earning "good-time credits" for staying out of trouble and said Billingsley earned enough credits to be released early.

"In the state of Maryland, you can earn what's called diminution credits. You get almost 30 days of good time for every month that you're in custody and you're not messing up," Bates said. "He did a little less than two-thirds of his sentence, and that's what the law allows."

"It is very clear that this individual posed a substantial danger."

Bates is calling on the Maryland General Assembly to revise laws surrounding good-time credits and serious sex offenders.

"When you look at it, it was more or less the systematic failure in terms of what happened, because when you look at this, the plea bargain was a little bit below guidelines, but it was a different administration. I don't know all the issues within the particular case," Bates said.

Billingsley is being held at Central Booking.

"My hope is that at least we can give a sense of closure to the city of Baltimore, victims of all of his crimes and all of their families," Worley said. "I thankfully, we got him into custody now. Hopefully, we can put him away for a longer period of time, the rest of his life."

BPD, mayor defend search for suspect

Reporters asked about the intense focus on this case, to which city leaders said that detectives take every case personally.

"What happened on this case, the evidence just came quicker to (detectives). It's not because of any other thing other than the fact that we got the evidence on this case quicker than we've got the evidence on (a killing near Gilman Elementary School)," Worley said. "We also have over 200 other homicides in the city this year. So, we work to try to solve every one of those cases."

"Our detectives do not care who it is. They work every case the same way. I see how it impacts them. I see how it even impacts their mental state and have to make sure that they themselves are OK because it's not normal to do what they do every day, and they do it better than any police department in the country for my money," Scott said. "We're going to continue to make sure that every single family that goes through something like this gets that same treatment."

Video below: Community gathers to remember Pava LaPere

TOP PICKS

National Taco Day: Artist turned love of tacos into high art in this 1994 retro find

The artist said he used tacos in his work because "they are just so funny!"

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11p Reporter

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ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. — Ken Baldwin, an artist and illustrator, used a well-loved food as the subject of a series of works in 1994... tacos.

Baldwin is the self-proclaimed founder of the "art taco movement." He used tacos to comment on popular culture, history and even natural disasters. Nothing was off limits.

WATCH the video to see his most talked about piece, "Taco Roadkill."

If you enjoyed this video, here are a few other tasty finds from the past!

RETRO FIND: Community baked pizza twice the size of a basketball court