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## Charges Filed in 2021 Pasadena Teen's Murder After Breakthrough in Surveillance Footage

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More than three years after 13-year-old Iran Moreno was fatally shot while playing video games in his bedroom, prosecutors have charged two individuals in connection with the boy's death, following advancements in surveillance technology that helped crack the case.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman announced that 38-year-old Muhammad Abdul-Malik has been charged with murder and an additional felony count for

being a felon in possession of a firearm. Alongside him, 31-year-old Teraeja Laquanna Flemmings has been charged as the alleged getaway driver in the November 2021 shooting. If convicted, both face the possibility of life in prison.

Iran Moreno's death shocked the Pasadena community when a stray bullet pierced the window of his home, killing him as he sat in his room playing video games. At the time, investigators said the teenager was not the intended target. Despite early efforts, the case went cold until recently.

The turning point came in June when Pasadena Police used newly available tools to enhance surveillance footage from the night of the shooting. Pasadena Police Lieutenant Carlo Montiglio told reporters the technology that allowed them to identify the suspects "just became available," enabling them to proceed with the investigation.

A week after the video was released, police issued sketches of the suspects based on the enhanced imagery. Those visuals led to the arrest of Abdul-Malik on July 11 in Orlando, Florida, and Flemmings five days later in San Fernando, California. Abdul-Malik is awaiting extradition to California, while Flemmings' arraignment is scheduled for Monday.

"The violence that took this young boy's life is not only tragic, but also unacceptable and criminal," said District Attorney Hochman in a public statement. "No family should ever have to endure the heartbreak of losing a child under such horrific circumstances. While we cannot undo this tragedy, we will work tirelessly to ensure those responsible are held accountable."

## Breakthrough Details

The Pasadena Police Department's breakthrough highlights the growing role of forensic video analysis in solving unresolved cases. According to Lt. Montiglio, the pair, once believed to be in a relationship at the time of the crime, are no longer connected.

While authorities still have not identified the intended target, Montiglio emphasized the shooting does not appear to have been gang-related or an act of retaliation. The motive remains unclear, but the focus remains squarely on securing justice for the innocent life lost.

The murder of Iran Moreno sparked widespread grief in Pasadena, with residents holding vigils in solidarity against gun violence. Then-Deputy Chief Cheryl Moody acknowledged

the tragedy within the context of a “rash of shootings” that had gripped the community, vowing increased efforts to remove illegal firearms from the streets.

“The threat of gun violence is a true danger,” Moody said at the time. “The Pasadena Police Department is working diligently to get guns off the streets and out of the hands of those who intend to harm others.”

The arrests mark a step toward closure for Moreno’s family and the community. Officials remain committed to bringing the case to trial.