

White Baton Rouge Suspect Is Charged with Murder in Killings of Two Black Men

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https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/19/us/baton-rouge-shooting-killings.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fus&action=click&contentCollection=us®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=3&pgtype=sectionfront

Original

The police in Baton Rouge, La., have charged a 23-year-old white man in the separate killings of two black men last week.

The suspect, Kenneth James Gleason, was charged on Tuesday with two counts of first degree murder in the killings of Bruce Cofield and Donald Smart, as well as two counts of attempted first degree murder in an unrelated shooting, said Sergeant L’Jean McKneely, a spokesman for the Baton Rouge Police Department.

Mr. Cofield was shot on Sept. 12, and Mr. Smart on Sept. 14. The men were killed in a similar manner, with a gunman first shooting from a vehicle and then exiting the car, standing over the victims and shooting multiple times, Mr. McKneely said.

The police, including Mr. McKneely, said last week that they believed that the killings may have been racially motivated. Mr. McKneely said Tuesday that the explanation had not been ruled out, but that it was speculative and that Mr. Gleason still needed to be questioned.

The attempted murder charges stemmed from an episode on Sept. 11 in which a house close to where Mr. Gleason lives was shot at three times, Mr. McKneely said. Two people were in the house at the time. Neither was injured.

Mr. Gleason was arrested Saturday on unrelated drug charges — possession of marijuana and human growth hormones — and was questioned about the killings.

He posted \$3,500 bail and was released Sunday, the police said. He was arrested again on Monday after being accused of petty theft.

Finally, on Tuesday, after the police had recovered DNA evidence from the shell casings at one of the crime scenes linked to Mr. Gleason, he was charged in the killings, Mr. McKneely said.

Re-write

A 23 year old man was charged for two killings of black men last week in Baton Rouge, La.

A spokesman for the local police department said the suspect was charged with two counts of first degree murder as well as two counts of attempted first degree murder in an unrelated incident.

The suspect shot both men first from a vehicle, then proceeded to stand over them and shoot multiple times. One was shot on Sept. 12, the other Sept. 14.

Local police believe that the murders may have been racially motivated, but was merely speculative and further questioning of the suspect is needed.

The charges come from an incident on Sept. 11 where a house near the suspect was shot at three times. The two inhabitants of the house were uninjured.

The suspect was arrested on Saturday on unrelated drug charges, and was then questioned about the killings.

Though he posted \$3,500 bail Sunday, he was arrested the next day for petty theft.

After the police recovered DNA evidence from a crime scene related to the suspect, he was then charged with the killings of the two men.