

Beat: Vips

'Blade Runner' Oscar Pistorius ordered to undergo mental evaluation

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USPA News - The trial of South African Paralympic athlete Oscar Pistorius, who is facing murder charges over the shooting death of his model girlfriend, was delayed Wednesday after the judge ordered he should undergo a month-long mental evaluation. Judge Thokozile Masipa stated that the evaluation was brought about because of a psychiatrist called by the defense team.

Referring to forensics psychiatrist Dr. Meryll Vorster, her evidence suggests that Pistorius is hyper-vigilant and has been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), stating that Pistorius has a "long history" of the disorder, according to EWN. The disorder has been "recognized for many decades," according to a professor of psychiatry from the University of Witwatersrand. The 30-day mental evaluation is to conclude if the disorder existed at the time of the murder, if it effected the situation in any way and, if so, to what extent. According to Masipa, "the evidence of Dr. Vorster has not been contradicted nor can it be in the absence of other psychiatric evidence." Since only two interviews were conducted and Vorster had "very little time to compile her report," a proper investigation would allow for Pistorius to get a fair trial, the judge said. In addition, Masipa advised for Pistorius to be treated as an outpatient, meaning he would not have to be hospitalized for the evaluation. Responding to Wednesday's order, Pistorius' uncle, Arnold Pistorius, expressed the family's confidence with judge Masipa's commitment in creating a fair trial for the athlete. "It reaffirms our confidence in South Africa's justice system," he said. Masipa said specific details about the mental evaluation are expected to be finalized next week but recognized it is certain to create more delays. "A referral inevitably means more delays in finalizing this matter, but this is not about anyone's convenience but rather about if justice has been served," she said. Pistorius is facing trial at the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria on charges of premeditated murder and reckless use of a firearm in public in connection with the shooting death of his girlfriend, 29-year-old Reevea Steenkamp, on Valentine's Day 2013. The famed athlete denies the charges, insisting the fatal shooting of his girlfriend was accidental. During a court hearing after the shooting, Pistorius claimed he had shot Steenkamp after confusing her with an intruder he believed was inside the house, but prosecutors have accused the athlete of murder. On February 22, 2013, Pistorius was freed on bail set at an estimated \$100,000. At the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, Pistorius participated as the first double-leg amputee to ever compete in the Olympics. He took part in the men's 400m and 4X400m relay races.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org

info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com