

SAFETY & JUSTICE NEWS

Markeith Loyd goes on profanity-laced rant, expert testifies he's incompetent

By **MONIVETTE CORDEIRO**
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Convicted cop-killer Markeith Loyd delivered a profanity-laced tirade at a Monday hearing as he struggled with deputies while trying to remove himself from the courtroom.

Loyd appeared to be frustrated by technology issues during the hearing that delayed a defense expert's virtual testimony.

"I said I'm leaving!" he shouted to Circuit Judge Leticia Marques as he insulted her. "Who is going to make me stay? You don't run me. ... Y'all don't run me [expletive]!"

After the technical issues were resolved, clinical psychologist Xavier Amador testified that he diagnosed Loyd with schizophrenia and found him incompetent to proceed with his case. Amador said some of Loyd's delusions are about the judge and prosecutors, who he believes are "slave masters" intent on killing a "slave," which is how Loyd refers to himself.

Another delusion centered around a pair of red high-heeled shoes worn by Marques on occasion in court. Loyd believed she was wearing those shoes because "she was out for [his] blood" and "determined to kill him," Amador testified.

Loyd, 46, faces a possible death sentence after a 12-person jury convicted him of first-degree murder in the 2017 killing of Orlando police Lt. Debra Clayton. The same jury unanimously recommended that Loyd should be executed for fatally shooting Clayton when she tried to arrest him for killing his pregnant ex-girlfriend, Sade Dixon.

The judge will decide whether to follow the jury's recommendation or sentence Loyd to life in prison. Marques allowed Loyd's attorneys to present Amador's testimony Monday because he was not available for a [sentencing hearing](#) last month.

The expert planned to testify about Loyd's diagnosis of anosognosia, which impairs his ability to recognize his own mental illness, court records show. But at the start of Monday's hearing, his attorneys told the judge Amador had also found Loyd incompetent.

After Loyd had an outburst and was escorted by deputies into a holding cell, defense attorney Allison Miller asked the judge to waive Loyd's appearance at the hearing, saying she observed in a recent interaction that he was "full-blown psychotic."

"He's manifested that behavior since the day he was arrested," the judge said. "... He needs to come back in the courtroom."

But Terence Lenamon, Loyd's other attorney, said he had never witnessed during his client's numerous past outbursts Loyd make contact with [Special Response Team](#) deputies from the Orange County Sheriff's Office, who surveil him in court. Loyd could be heard cursing and arguing with his other attorneys in the holding cell.

"He's never exhibited a contact with SRT in any of those situations and today he did," Lenamon said.

After a brief recess, Amador testified over the phone while Loyd was placed in a different room where he could still see and hear the proceedings. The psychologist said Loyd does not understand the proceedings taking place against him and has a "fixed, false belief that there is absolutely nothing wrong with him."

"My testimony wouldn't convince him in any way, shape or form that he has a mental illness," Amador said.

During cross-examination, Assistant State Attorney Rich Buxman asked Amador if Loyd was using the "slave master" reference as a metaphor for his feelings about systemic racism in the criminal justice system.

"No, he has certainty that the court, the judge in this case and the government in this case are slave masters," Amador said. "He is a slave and the slave masters are seeking his death. He didn't talk about the system as a whole."

Buxman said no other medical professionals diagnosed Loyd with schizophrenia during his incarceration.

"Is your testimony that a person with schizophrenia not controlled by medication would be able to hide the symptoms from trained professionals over the course of decades?" Buxman asked.

"In many cases, yes," Amador responded.

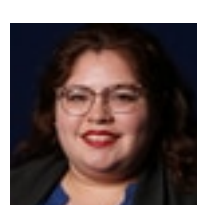
The judge said she was going to appoint two more experts to evaluate Loyd for competency. She tentatively scheduled a competency hearing for Feb. 21.

Loyd's sentencing is set for March 3, but it now hinges on whether Marques will find him competent.

This is the second time Loyd faces a possible death sentence.

He was convicted of first-degree murder in 2019 for killing Dixon but avoided the death penalty after jurors recommended he be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

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