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Arraignment Postponed In Jamiel Shaw's Murder

LOS ANGELES Arraignment was postponed Tuesday for the 19-year-old alleged gang member charged in the March 2 murder of Jamiel Shaw, a popular and promising 17-year-old Los Angeles High School football player.

Shaw's family and friends -- many wearing T-shirts with the victim's photo -- were in the downtown courtroom for the brief hearing for Pedro Espinoza, whose arraignment was rescheduled for April 9.

At least one woman was also in court on behalf of Espinoza, who is charged with murder in the killing of the 17-year-old Shaw in the 2100 block of Fifth Avenue, not far from the Shaw family's Arlington Heights home.

The charge includes a special circumstance allegation that the defendant was "an active participant in a criminal street gang and the murder was carried out to further the activities of the criminal street gang."

The criminal complaint also alleges that Espinoza personally discharged a handgun.

Prosecutors are expected to decide later whether to seek the death penalty against Espinoza, who was arrested March 7 and charged March 11, hours before Shaw's funeral.

Espinoza is being held without bail.

According to police, Shaw was three blocks from his home at about 8:30 p.m. when Espinoza and another suspect pulled up in a white compact. Espinoza got out of the vehicle and asked Shaw, "Where are you from?" - - meaning what gang -- before he opened fire, police said. Shaw was shot twice.

The shooting occurred just one day after Espinoza had been released from county jail, where he had been serving time for assault with a deadly weapon, said LAPD Detective Mark Holguin.

Shaw lived in an area known to be the territory of the Bloods but was not associated with any gang, according to police.

Shaw, a running back, was named his team's and the Southern League's Most Valuable Player in 2007 and had drawn the interest of recruiters from several major colleges including Stanford and Rutgers.


The teen's mother, Army Sgt. Anita Shaw, was serving in Iraq when her son was slain.

U.S. immigration officials have said Espinoza, a suspected member of the 18th Street gang, may be in the US illegally. (© 2008 CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Wire services contributed to this report.)

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