

## CRIME

# Security guard charged in fatal gas station shooting had prior homicide conviction



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A gas station's security guard who was previously convicted of homicide decades ago and was barred from possessing guns was charged in the shooting death of Isaiah Allen on Sunday.

Prosecutors charged William Pinkin, 56, with first-degree intentional homicide in a case that has drawn scrutiny to the gas station who employed him and the state's laws on private security.

The criminal complaint alleges Pinkin shot Allen in the back of the head after witnessing him take a box of snack cakes and walking out.

"He was a really good person. He didn't deserve to die like that," said Zavier Easter Bryant, a cousin of Allen. "It doesn't make sense. It doesn't feel real to anybody."

Protests have been held outside the gas station, Teutonia Gas & Food, 4295 N. Teutonia Ave., since Allen, 29, was killed Wednesday. The business remained closed Tuesday.

Here's what you need to know about the incident:

## **Who is Isaiah Allen?**

Allen, of Milwaukee, was a father of two children ages 3 and 9, according to Bryant. He said on the day of the shooting, Allen was planning to leave for Tennessee and check into a drug rehabilitation center.

Bryant said Allen suffered from mental health issues but didn't detail them.

"My son was a loving father, a great son, a wonderful brother and the funniest uncle in the world," Allen's mother, Natalie Easter Allen, said in a statement.

## **Who is William Pinkin?**

Pinkin, also of Milwaukee, was a security guard employed by Teutonia Gas & Food, according to the criminal complaint.

Online court records show Pinkin was convicted of first-degree reckless homicide and robbery in Milwaukee County in 1989. He shot the clerk of a smoke shop in the head with a sawed-off shotgun during a robbery in May of that year, according to court records.

One of his accomplices told police that Pinkin laughed about the shooting afterward.

He was released on state supervision in March of this year, according to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

Pinkin began working at the gas station in late spring or early summer, according to Monashay Howard, who lives near the gas station and has been active in demonstrations after Allen's death.

Howard, who ran a food stand outside the gas station, said Pinkin was "very erratic" but not known to carry a gun.

Pinkin hadn't been assigned a lawyer as of Monday morning, according to the Wisconsin State Public Defender's Office.

## **What happened at the gas station?**

Police recovered surveillance camera footage, which showed the entirety of the incident. According to the criminal complaint:

Allen entered the store shortly before 6:20 a.m. Wednesday while a security guard was seated in the back of the business.

Video shows Allen grabbed a box of Little Debbie snack cakes and left with it. The security guard rose from his chair and approached Allen while producing a handgun.

Within about arm's distance, the guard shot Allen in the back of the head. While waiting for police to respond, the guard calmly smoked a cigarette.

He told officers he works at the store but didn't see the shooting. He then left the scene.

Pinkin was later identified and arrested.

## **What is Pinkin's status as a security guard?**

Pinkin didn't have a permit to act as a security guard, according to online records from the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. As a convicted felon, he was also barred from possessing a gun.

However, Wisconsin doesn't require security guards who are directly employed by a business to obtain a permit, according to the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

Anyone who wants to work as a security guard for a private security agency must obtain a permit. They are not eligible for those who have been arrested under suspicion of a misdemeanor or convicted of a felony.

Armed security professionals are required to complete 36 hours of firearms training, according to the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

## **What is the status of the gas station?**

The owner of Teutonia Gas & Food, Gurinder Nagra, said what happened "was just insane" and that Pinkin had been working for him for a little more than a month.

"I didn't know he was carrying a gun. He was not supposed to do that," Nagra said.

He asked the Journal Sentinel to contact his attorney for further comment. Calls to the attorney were not returned Monday afternoon.

The business remained closed while protesters adorned the building with signs saying "Revoke their license now" and "Closed for justice."

Allen's family and activists held a news conference on Tuesday outside the gas station. Many who spoke talked about businesses, that are not Black-owned, causing more problems for the Black community than they are providing benefits. Many who spoke insist that the gas station should be shut down.

Ald. Andrea Pratt, who represents the area, said in a news release she has "many questions about armed security that I am looking into" and called for the business to remain closed

during the investigation.

Howard called the business an "accessory to murder" and said residents were disappointed it failed the community after becoming something of a neighborhood hub.

"I feel like within our community, we found a way to make it to work for us and use it as an access point," she said.

Pratt said businesses shouldn't be able to include security in their operations if it's not credentialed by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. She said she would explore legislation that further regulates private security.

"When businesses operate in our neighborhoods, they choose to become part of our community, which means they have a responsibility to uphold as a community establishment," Pratt said.

*Drake Bentley contributed to this report.*

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