

Commonwealth's Attorney
Colin D. Stolle

Chief Deputies
Susan G. Hooks
Scott M. Lang

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY
CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

Deputies
Wendy Alexander
Tabitha B. Anderson
Sara R. Chandler
Patrick J. Connolly
Janee D. Joslin
David W. Laird
Paul J. Powers

2425 Nimmo Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23456-9050

(757) 385-4401
FAX (757) 385-1288
TDD: 711
www.vbgov.com/oca

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Macie Allen (757) 385-8545
mpallen@vbgov.com

**Commonwealth v. Courtney Ian Moreno
39 Years in Prison for Shooting Ex-Girlfriend over 20 Times**

Virginia Beach, Va. – Colin D. Stolle, Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Virginia Beach, announced that Courtney Ian Moreno, 44, of Henrico, Virginia, was sentenced today for First Degree Murder, Use of a Firearm, and Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon. Circuit Court Judge Stephen C. Mahan sentenced Moreno to 48 years in prison with nine (9) years suspended, leaving 39 years to serve.

Moreno pled guilty on August 23, 2021. If this matter had gone to trial, the Commonwealth's evidence would have proven that on the night of May 23, 2019, Courtney Ian Moreno drove from Henrico to Virginia Beach to murder his ex-girlfriend, Estella Sophia Hoggard. Earlier that evening, Hoggard complained to her current boyfriend that Moreno was calling and texting her. Moreno claimed he wanted his Kaplan University diploma back from Hoggard. Shortly after 10:30 p.m., Hoggard left her apartment with the diploma, telling her boyfriend she would be right back. She never returned.

Around midnight, a Virginia Beach police officer on patrol noticed a car with headlights on in an empty parking lot at an office building off S. Lynnhaven Road. The officer found Hoggard's car, still running, on a grass median with Hoggard's body in the driver's seat. Hoggard was covered in blood and had over 20 gunshot wounds. Her driver's window was shot out and there were bullet holes on the interior of both doors.

A witness described hearing over 15 shots around 11 p.m. Video surveillance showed Moreno enter the parking lot around 10:40 p.m. Around 20 minutes later, Hoggard drove into the parking lot and stopped. After several seconds, her car rolled forward for several hundred feet until it came

to a stop. A second car followed with headlights off and stopped near her car. Moreno then got out of that vehicle and approached Hoggard's vehicle for two minutes before returning to his own vehicle and driving away. Twelve shell casings were found at the first location, several hundred feet from where Hoggard's vehicle was found. Others were found in her car and right outside of it. Moreno shot her multiple times at the first site and then again at the second one.

Cell phone records showed Moreno left Henrico County, drove to the scene of the murder, then returned to the Richmond area. When he was arrested on May 24, officers found in his residence his Kaplan University diploma and Hoggard's iWatch and Garmin GPS. A search of his cell phone showed that in the hours after the murder, Moreno searched the Internet for pornography, reports of bodies found in Virginia Beach, and how to remove gunshot residue.

In an interview with police, he eventually admitted that he shot Hoggard 16 or 17 times as she sat in her car, firing until the clip was empty. He then got out of his vehicle and fired repeatedly at her until he emptied a second clip. In a recorded phone call Moreno made from the Henrico jail, he told a woman that he was angry because the victim had not given him all his stuff and that he "was just doing what I had to do." He stated that he fired 36 shots and that "some people ask for the shit that get done to them."

Moreno has a prior conviction for Grand Larceny, Assault and Battery of a Family Member, Tampering, Petit Larceny, misdemeanor Eluding Police, Driving on Suspended Operator's License (2 counts) and two Probation Violations.

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys Andrew R. Parker and Scott C. Vachris prosecuted this case. Please contact Macie Allen if additional information is desired.

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