



Rod Underhill, District Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 2, 2018

Multnomah County District Attorney's Office press release on State v. Sophia Adler

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced 33-year-old Sophia Adler pleaded guilty to one count of unlawful possession of a firearm stemming from a shooting that occurred on May 21, 2018 at Southwest 2nd Avenue and Southwest Ash Street in Portland, Oregon.

The shooting resulted in the death of 28-year-old Gigi Pierce.

During today's change of plea and sentencing hearing, Gigi was remembered by a family member as being very talented and as someone who had "so much potential."

"For Sophia, we ask that you turn your life around -- that you get the help for your addiction that you have struggled with -- that you get the mental health treatment that you truly need and that you try with everything in the future...to be productive in society, to be clean and sober and to find a home and better yourself," the family member told the court via conference call.

Adler was booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center on May 22 and charged with one count of murder and made her first court appearance that day.

A grand jury, consisting of seven members of the community, selected by the Court, convened over a period of three days and reviewed extensive evidence regarding the criminal investigation conducted by the Portland Police Bureau's Homicide Detail.

At the request of Adler's criminal defense attorney, she appeared before the grand jury. Under Oregon law, pursuant to ORS 132.320(12)(a), a defendant, in custody, and charged by way of a District Attorney's Information, has a legal right to testify during a grand jury proceeding.

The grand jury returned an indictment that charged Adler with one count of unlawful possession of a firearm and returned a not true bill on the murder charge.

"From the very early stages of this investigation, we knew this was not a hate crime," said Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney J.R. Ujifusa, who prosecuted this case. "Ms. Adler and Gigi were friends. They had known each other for years. The question we needed to answer was whether this was a murder or a case of self-defense. The Portland Police Bureau conducted a meticulous investigation to answer that question. After reviewing all of the available evidence, and analyzing Oregon's self-defense laws, the grand jury determined Ms. Adler should not be charged with murder."

The charge of unlawful possession of a firearm resulted because the defendant did not have a Concealed Handgun License for the .45 caliber Hi-Point pistol hidden in her purse at the time of the shooting. The firearm was legally purchased.

"When Ms. Adler spoke with law enforcement about why she used deadly force, she told them that during a fight between her and Gigi, Gigi was less than a foot away and was holding a knife in her right hand when Gigi tried to stab her," Ujifusa said. "Ms. Adler told police she was 'scared' when she saw the knife coming towards her face so she fired her pistol once

while it was still inside her purse. After the shooting, Ms. Adler remained on scene, spoke with 9-1-1 dispatchers and was cooperative with law enforcement throughout the entire investigation.”

Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Patrick W. Henry accepted Adler’s guilty plea on August 2 and sentenced her to 100 days in jail with credit for time served. Adler also received 24 months of formal probation, was ordered to undergo drug/alcohol and mental health evaluations and participate in any treatment as ordered. She will not be able to contact Gigi’s family, unless approved by her probation officer. Additionally, the gun used in this offense will be confiscated and destroyed.

“Gigi’s death had a profound impact on our community. It was clear to us that Gigi was loved by many, and that she will be missed by her family and friends. I hope with time and understanding, there will begin to be some sort of closure for those impacted by this terrible event,” said Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill.

Copies of the police reports filed in this case are now considered publicly available and can be requested through the City of Portland’s [Public Records Request Center](#) using PPB Case No. 18-169551

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