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Joshua Carlson pleads guilty to April 2017 homicide in Southeast Portland

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced 32-year-old Joshua Scott Carlson pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the first degree.

According to court documents previously filed, this investigation started on April 21, 2017 when a police officer assigned to the Portland Police Bureau drove into the parking lot of a motel located in the 3100 block of Southeast Powell Boulevard. The officer checked the license plate of a parked SUV and learned the vehicle was reported as stolen. A second officer with PPB arrived at the motel and began watching the vehicle as the other officer started a criminal investigation. While the officers were on scene, the defendant entered the parked SUV and drove off. A high speed pursuit followed.

During the investigation, law enforcement learned the defendant was associated with one of the motel rooms. Officers entered the motel room. According to court documents, upon entering the motel room, which had been previously registered in the defendant's name, police located the body of Valerie Johnson. An autopsy determined Ms. Johnson, 42, died as a result of being strangled and determined her death to be a homicide.

During the course of the death investigation, law enforcement was notified that an SUV had been abandoned in the 4000 block of Southeast 51st Avenue, according to court documents. The vehicle matched the description of the SUV involved in the high speed chase that was terminated due to safety concerns. The Portland Police Bureau's Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) responded and started searching for the driver of the abandoned SUV. The defendant was located hiding on the roof of a nearby residence. He was taken into custody without incident, according to court documents and previously information released by the Portland Police Bureau.

The family of Ms. Johnson appeared at Thursday's hearing by phone. They are supportive of this case resolution.

Carlson's sentencing is tentatively scheduled for September 7, 2018 before Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Christopher Marshall.

#MCDA#

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