

Pierce County

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KNIGHT SENTENCED TO 71 AND A HALF YEARS FOR CRAIGSLIST KILLING

TACOMA, WA - Today Amanda C. Knight, 22, was sentenced to seventy-one and a half years in prison for her role in the home invasion robbery and murder of James Sanders last year in Edgewood, Washington. A jury convicted Knight of all charges related to the crime, including Murder in the First Degree, two counts of Robbery in the First Degree, two counts of Assault in the Second Degree, and Burglary in the First Degree.

Knight contacted Sanders, a 43-year-old husband and father, under the pretext of buying a diamond ring that he offered for sale on Craigslist. She and co-defendant Kiyoshi Higashi went to the Sanders' home late in the evening on April 28, 2010, posing as buyers. After they were admitted into the home, Higashi pulled out a gun. Co-defendants Joshua Reese and Clabon Bernard, who were waiting outside, then entered as well. The defendants bound James Sanders and his wife Charlene with zip ties and assaulted the couple and their two sons. James Sanders was shot to death trying to protect his family. The defendants fled the home with jewelry, cell phones and other items.

Prosecutor Mark Lindquist said, "Amanda Knight was an active accomplice to a brutal crime and we are pleased that the jury and the judge agreed she should be held fully accountable. We said from the beginning that Ms. Knight was as responsible as the defendant who pulled the trigger. Seventy-one and a half years, the functional equivalent of a life sentence, is justice."

Chief Criminal Deputy Mary Robnett and Deputy Prosecutor Karen Watson prosecuted both Knight and Higashi in separate trials. The jury deliberated for just three hours before returning guilty verdicts for Knight. Higashi was previously convicted as charged by a different jury on March 8 and was sentenced to 123 years in prison.

Joshua Reese and Clabon Bernard are set for separate trials later this year. The charges against Reese and Bernard are allegations at this point. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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