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Sarah Brown receives eight year prison sentence for shooting at police after breaking into a SW Portland home

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that 28-year-old Sarah Brown received an eight year prison sentence for breaking into a home, pointing a gun at police and then firing three rounds toward officers.

This investigation started on March 7, 2018 when Portland Police responded to a home in the 800 block of Southwest King Avenue after receiving information about an in-progress burglary. The homeowner told emergency dispatchers that he noticed his cordless-landline phone in use. He picked up the phone and heard an unknown female's hushed voice talking to someone. The homeowner used his cell phone to call police.

Portland Police responded and checked the home. Although they did not locate anyone inside the residence, they did find the handset to the homeowner's cordless phone missing and an external window damaged. The evidence was documented and police prepared to leave.

While completing the initial residential burglary investigation on Southwest King Avenue, police received information about a burglary that had occurred at a motel adjacent to the home. There, motel guests told police that clothing and other items had been taken from a room. Police later located some of these items in the backyard of the home that had been burglarized earlier in the night. Without any suspect identified, officers left.

Several hours later, an employee from the motel heard suspicious noises coming from an area between the motel and the home that had been burglarized earlier in the night. The employee looked around and saw a person, later identified as Brown, in the backyard pacing back and forth and looking into the homeowner's residence. He called police.

Police set up containment around the neighborhood.

Multiple officers responded including a police K-9 unit. Upon doing so, they saw the front door to the residence they were at earlier in the night was now wide open. The K-9 alerted to suspicious activity inside a storage compartment under an external staircase. Officers could hear someone making noise inside the storage area. They announced their presence and told the person to surrender but no response was provided.

Portland Police Officer Grant Smith pulled open the storage area door, which is when Brown pointed a gun in his face at a distance of approximately one to two feet. Officer Smith yelled out "gun!"

Portland Police Officer Darrell Shaw, who was standing next to Officer Smith, gave Brown commands to drop her weapon and then fired his police issued handgun.

Officers retreated to find protection around the corner of the house. While waiting for ballistic shields to arrive, officers started negotiating with Brown, who threatened to shoot officers if they approached. Brown said she did not believe the people giving her commands were police officers.

Additional officers arrived and provided ballistic shields to the officers who were in front of the gun. Two officers used the shields to extend the wall in an attempt to protect them from any rounds fired toward them. As members of the Portland Police Bureau's Crisis Negotiation Team spoke with Brown she fired multiple shots in the proximity of officers.

In response, Officer Joseph Webber, who was standing over the officers holding up the ballistic shields, fired his police AR-15 rifle.

The negotiations continued and during that time, officers with the Portland Police Bureau's Special Emergency Response Team saw that Brown no longer had the gun in her hand. The tactical officers used an opportunity to successfully take Brown into custody, which is when they observed her with two gunshot wounds, one to the finger and the other to the leg.

Police recovered the gun used by Brown and determined it to be a .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun.

After the shooting, while police were investigating the incident, a person approached police and told officers that his loaded .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun was missing. Police determined the owner of the gun left it fully loaded inside his unlocked vehicle, which was parked at the motel, and that Brown found it and took it. Police located the gun's holster inside the storage area where Brown fired at officers.

On March 22, 2018, a grand jury returned a not true bill regarding the use of deadly force by Officer Shaw and Officer Webber. The grand jury determined the use of deadly force to be a lawful act of self-defense or defense of another person. The grand jury also returned an indictment against Brown for the attempted murder of the police officers and other crimes.

Upon changing her plea, the court convicted Brown of three counts of attempted murder in the first degree, two counts of unlawful use of a weapon and one count of burglary in the first degree.

This sentence takes into account both aggravating factors and mitigating factors, which included Brown's drug addiction, her mental health both at the time of this incident and while in custody, the fact that she had no prior criminal record, and the incredible risk she put the public and law enforcement in by engaging in this dangerous and potentially deadly conduct.

The Portland Police Bureau and other victims in this case support this pretrial resolution.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office recognizes the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct Officers Grant Smith, Darrell Shaw, Joseph Webber, Benson Weinberger, and Torrey Streed, among others who responded and put their lives in danger to investigate these crimes and to Detective Scott Broughton who was the primary investigator.

This case was prosecuted by Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Todd Jackson.

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