

## **Year after fatal raid, woman goes free Marshal - Patriot-News, The (Harrisburg, PA) - January 20, 2019 - page 003**

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One year after a deadly police raid in Harrisburg, the woman at the center of the investigation has been paroled from prison and charged with eight new drug crimes.

But Shayla L. Towles Pierce, 31, likely will not face any charges related to the death of deputy U.S. Marshal Christopher Hill at her home on Jan. 18, 2018.

Hill was struck by friendly fire after Pierce's boyfriend, Kevin Sturgis, surprised the U.S. marshals task force by firing at members from the second floor of the home. Members of the task force returned fire, and bullets penetrated the wall, striking Hill, who was clearing a backroom.

Sturgis later died in a gunbattle in the street in front of the home.

Federal officials filed a detainer against Pierce shortly after the raid in the 1800 block of Mulberry Street, indicating their interest in looking at her for possible additional charges. The detainer was intended to keep her behind bars in case she was able to post bail on two misdemeanors and an illegal gun possession charge, which ostensibly were the charges behind the raid by the U.S. marshal's task force.

Her attorney at the time said he was concerned she could get indicted over her connection to the raid.

As it turned out, seven months after the raid, the federal detainer was lifted without any public notice.

Pierce pleaded guilty to misdemeanor

charges of terroristic threats and simple assault and a third-degree felony gun charge Aug. 27 and was released on "immediate parole" for time served. She had been in jail since the day of the raid for allegedly pointing a gun at a motorist who had asked Pierce to move her car, which was blocking the street. Pierce also was placed on five years of probation and assigned \$3,740 in court costs plus \$1,250 in fines.

As part of her sentence, she is forbidden from visiting her old neighborhood, where the victim of the assault lived.

But before Pierce could get out of prison, Dauphin County prosecutors immediately filed six felonies and two misdemeanors against her for illegal drugs that allegedly were found inside the home during the raid.

Police had not previously mentioned that they had found drugs inside the home.

The new charges kept her behind bars for about 10 more days until she posted \$30,000 monetary bail on Sept. 10. She has been free ever since. She appeared for arraignment Dec. 7. Her next court date is set for March 18.

Court records to support the drug charges against Pierce said officers found in her home: more than 1.5 pounds of marijuana, 2 ounces of liquid PCP, two electronic scales and a "narcotics ledger" written on Pierce's bedroom mirror.

The amount of marijuana is beyond what someone would maintain for personal use, police said. The drug is often sold in one-eighth-ounce bags, so the amount confiscated could equate to 192 individual sales and net a dealer between nearly \$5,000 and \$10,000, depending on the quality.

Police also found \$7,000 in cash hidden in four bundles throughout Pierce's home. One bundle was wrapped in tinfoil and tucked into the freezer. Three other bundles were hidden behind a painting hanging on the wall, according to court records.

Police also reported finding a box of .45-caliber ammunition in Pierce's underwear drawer. The gun Sturgis used to shoot at the deputy marshals was a .45-caliber gun, according to investigators.

The new charges against Pierce are two felony counts of drug distribution, four felony counts of conspiracy and two misdemeanor counts of child endangerment for "allowing the operation of an illegal drug distribution in the home," according to court records.

Pierce, Sturgis and two children were the only ones inside the home when the U.S. marshals task force knocked on the door in the early hours of Jan. 18, 2018, with an arrest warrant in hand.

Prosecutors last year gave this account of the shooting:

Pierce and the children came downstairs to meet police, and officers had started to handcuff Pierce when Sturgis yelled "Are you looking for me?" from the top of the staircase.

He then fired a single round at officers, hitting a York officer in the arm.

Task force members fired back, and retreated through the dining room and rear door with the mortally wounded Hill.

Sturgis then ran out the front door of the house, and continued to fire on officers, striking a Harrisburg officer in the chest. A bullet resistant vest saved his life. He later retired from the department.

The York officer shot in the right arm has since returned to patrol duty, according to the York Daily Record.

Officer Kyle Pitts learned how to shoot with his left arm to return to duty, according to the YDR report.

