

## **Woman at shootout persecuted, lawyer says - - Patriot-News, The (Harrisburg, PA) - February 4, 2018 - page A7**

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### **HARRISBURG**

A Harrisburg woman is being persecuted by authorities simply because she was present when a deputy U.S. marshal was fatally shot in her home last month, her lawyer insisted Thursday.

Defense Attorney Aaron Holt made that argument as he urged District Judge Hanif Johnson to reduce the \$200,000 bail that is keeping 30-year-old Shayla Pierce in prison on charges of simple assault and making terroristic threats.

The charges stem from a Nov. 25 incident. They were the subject of an arrest warrant a marshal's task force used to enter Pierce's Mulberry Street home during a Jan. 18 raid that resulted in the deaths of Deputy Marshal Christopher Hill and Pierce's boyfriend, **Kevin Sturgis**.

Thursday's preliminary hearing before Johnson dealt only with the simple assault/terroristic threats case, which the judge sent on to Dauphin County Court. That case involves allegations that Pierce threatened a neighbor with a gun during a dispute over double-parking.

The fatal police raid wasn't even mentioned until Holt made his plea for a bail reduction. He called Pierce's bail "exorbitant," far higher than warranted for a mere assault case. "I believe it would be in everyone's best interest for my client to be allowed to go home," Holt said.

"It's a gun case," Chief Deputy District Attorney Michael Rozman countered. "You point a gun at someone and threaten to shoot them, that's serious."

Holt became visibly angry. He said Pierce is being scapegoated because an officer lost his life. "The law is using all its power to come down on her," he said. "Everybody is trying to see her hang for something she didn't do."

"I wanted to make sure I got that out because it's the truth," Holt added.

Rozman suggested Holt file a bail reduction petition with a county judge. Holt insisted that Johnson should make the call on bail.

"I'm not touching the bail," Johnson said.

Thursday's hearing focused on charges that Pierce, a mother of three, pointed a pistol at another woman during an argument over Pierce's decision to double-park her car and block traffic in the 1800 block of Mulberry Street.

Terri Littles testified that she and other drivers were honking for Pierce to move her car, to no avail. Littles said she knocked on Pierce's door to ask her to move her car.

"She said it was in front of her house and she'd do what she wanted," Littles said. "She got smart. She slammed the door."

Littles said she was on her phone with the police when Pierce came out of her home, rifled through the trunk of her car, then began arguing with her.

"And then she pulled out a gun," Littles said. It was silver and black, possibly a Glock 9, she said. She said Pierce pointed the pistol at her twice as neighbors urged Pierce to put the gun away.

"She said, 'I'll shoot you,' or, 'I'll blow your brains out,'" Littles said.

Under Holt's questioning, Littles said she had gotten out of her car when Pierce first displayed the gun. Holt asked if the women were cursing at each other.

"I can't deny it," Littles replied. "It was in the moment. I had to go to work. Everyone was beeping."

Littles, who is much larger than Pierce, said she did move toward Pierce after the gun was drawn. "I was just so furious," she said.

The only other witness Rozman called was city police Officer Rachel James. She testified that Pierce isn't licensed to carry a concealed gun.

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