



NEWS RELEASE

January 12, 2018

Teen Sentenced to 5 Years in 2016 Thornton House Party Shooting

Angelo Alvarez was sentenced Friday to five years in the Youthful Offender System for second-degree murder in the shooting death of 16-year-old Haley Vargaz at a homecoming party in Thornton.

"This is as sad and tragic a case as I have seen," District Attorney Dave Young said. "Angelo Alvarez fired a gun into a crowd of people at a party without any thought of the consequences and Haley Vargaz was killed. This remarkable young woman had won a battle with cancer but her determination in overcoming cancer could not save her from the defendant's bullet. The loss of Haley has devastated her family and everyone who knew her."

Alvarez (DOB 04/01/99) fired multiple shots into a crowd of people outside of a high school homecoming party in the 13000 block of Monaco Way in Thornton on September 17, 2016. Haley Vargaz, a Thornton High School junior, was shot in the back and killed.

The party went out of control after a flurry of Facebook posts about the event led to carloads of people showing up who were not invited. A fistfight broke out between two groups of females, and Alvarez fired his gun into the air from the front porch of the residence. Another person then fired his weapon into the air. Alvarez fired into the crowd as the teens began running from the house. Haley Vargaz was shot in the back as she fled, trying to get to her car.

An Adams County grand jury indicted Alvarez last March on charges of one count of first-degree murder with extreme indifference (F1) and five counts of attempted first-degree murder with extreme indifference (F2). He was charged as an adult. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in October.

In imposing the sentence, Chief District Judge Patrick Murphy warned Alvarez that he has been given an opportunity to turn his life around and if he fails to comply with the strict requirements of his YOS sentence, that sentence will be revoked and he will be sent to prison for 20 years.

Young said that difficulties with the case led to the plea agreement. "This is a difficult case," he said. "The punishment doesn't seem to fit the crime and no one is happy with this outcome, but we have to look at what justice is in this case, and in my mind, this is justice. There was significant risk that the defendant could be found not guilty based on the evidence in this case. Now he must take responsibility for his actions and comply with this program. If he doesn't, he will be spending 20 years in prison."

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