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## Office of the District Attorney Nineteenth Judicial District

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### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Probable Cause Found Against 19-Year-Old Woman in Pierce Biker Gang Murder



GREELEY, Colo. (Weld County D.A.) – A Weld County District Court Judge ruled today that probable cause exists in the case against Karly Hanchett (06/21/1997), one of six co-defendants who allegedly played a part in the stabbing death of a Pierce woman in 2015.

The judge also stipulated that she be held in custody without bond.

Hanchett faces three charges, including first-degree murder after deliberation (F1), conspiracy to commit first-degree murder after deliberation (F2) and violent crime causing death (sentence enhancement).

The case dates back to late September 2015 when the victim, Tara Lewandowski, 34, was reported missing after she failed to show up for a doctor's appointment. Her body was later found in April nearly 100 miles away in Laramie, Wyoming.

According to the affidavit, the murder was orchestrated by Daniel "DJ" Meyer, 36, a former Pierce Town Board member, Mike Vassil, 24, Chad Iler, 19, Karly Hanchett and her 21-year-old brother, Scott. Records indicate all the above mentioned are members of the "21 Biker Gang."

Another defendant, Crystal Griffin, 37, cooperated with investigators by detailing the crime, telling police Karly hit the victim in the back of the head with an unknown object while Meyer stabbed her in the chest with a hunting knife.

Griffin told police she believed the murder stemmed from an argument between the victim and Karley Hanchett and after the victim got mad at Meyer for stealing her prescription medications. "DJ [Meyer] said he had to kill Tera because he's the 'Enforcer' in the gang," Griffin said in the affidavit.

*The filing of a criminal charge is merely a formal accusation that an individual(s) committed a crime(s) under Colorado laws. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. See Colo. RPC 3.6*



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According to testimony, the group also planned an elaborate cover-up by burning the victim's belongings, tearing out portions of the blood-stained carpet and dropping her body off in a field nearly 100 miles from the scene.

**What's Next:**

1. Daniel "DJ" Meyer (15CR2044) is set for an arraignment on October 6 at 10:00 a.m.
2. Mike Vassil (15CR2041) is set for an arraignment on October 6 at 10:30 a.m.
3. Scott Hanchett (15CR2066) is set for an arraignment on November 1 at 2:30 p.m.
4. Karly Hanchett (15CR2045) is set for an arraignment on November 1 at 3:00 p.m.

**Case Closed:**

1. Crystal Griffin plead guilty to accessory to murder on 5/06/16 and was sentenced to serve 12 years in community corrections.
2. Chad Iler plead guilty on 05/03/2016 to conspiracy to commit murder and accessory to a crime and was sentenced to serve three years in the DOC and 13 years probation.

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