



WHITE FLORIDA WOMAN SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SHOOTING BLACK NEIGHBOR IN LENGTHY DISPUTE - ASSOCIATED PRESS

Posted on November 26, 2024 by CURT ANDERSON | ASSOCIATED PRESS



Defendant Susan Lorincz, left, who fatally shot a Black neighbor through her front door during an ongoing dispute, weeps during her sentencing hearing Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, in Ocala, Fla.

A white Florida woman who [fatally shot a Black neighbor](#) through her front door during an ongoing dispute over the neighbor's boisterous children was sentenced Monday to 25 years in prison for her manslaughter conviction.

Susan Lorincz, 60, was convicted in August of killing Ajike "A.J." Owens, 35, by firing a single shot from her .380-caliber handgun in June 2023. She had faced a maximum of 30 years behind bars. Circuit Judge Robert Hodges opted for a slightly lesser term amid evidence that Lorincz had been abused as a child and had mental health problems.

"The shooting was completely unnecessary in this case," Hodges said during an afternoon hearing. "The shooting, I find, was based more in anger than in fear."

The shooting was the culmination of a long-running argument between the two neighbors over Owens' children playing in a grassy area near both of their houses in Ocala, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Orlando.

Prosecutors said Owens had come to Lorincz's home after her children complained that she had thrown roller skates and an umbrella at them, which Lorincz denied. Trial testimony showed Owens, a mother of four young children, was pounding on Lorincz's door and yelling, leading Lorincz to claim self-defense in shooting her neighbor.

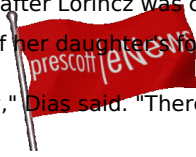
Lorincz told detectives in a videotaped interview that [she feared for her life](#). She also said she had been harassed for most of the three years she had lived in the neighborhood. Jurors who heard the trial evidence did not agree that the shooting was in self-defense.

In a statement to the judge, Lorincz apologized to Owens' family but said she was "literally terrified" of Owens the night of the shooting.

"I so wish I could go back and change things so she was still here," Lorincz said. "I never intended to kill anyone."

Owens' family pushed for the maximum prison sentence after Lorincz was convicted by an all-white jury. Owens' mother, Pamela Dias, said in court Monday that she now is the sole caregiver of her daughter's four children and that they are deeply traumatized by the killing.

"We're hurting with a pain that will never, never go away," Dias said. "There's a hole in our heart that will never mend. Susan destroyed our family."



Lorincz's attorney, Assistant Public Defender Amanda Sizemore, sought a more lenient sentence, an unspecified term below the 11.5 years in prison that is the lowest for her crime under state guidelines. Sizemore said in court documents that there were several reasons to justify a downward departure, including a mental disorder and claims that Owens was the aggressor and under "extreme duress" during the confrontation.

The judge said such a departure was not warranted, especially considering the impact of their mother's violent death on her children.

"They'll live their whole lives without their mother, which I think is a very significant harm inflicted by Ms. Lorincz," Hodges said.

There were protests in the Black community in Ocala when prosecutors took weeks to [charge Lorincz with manslaughter](#), a lesser count than second-degree murder, which carries a potential life prison sentence. Marion County, which includes Ocala, has a Black population of about 12%, according to census figures.