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# Jesus ‘forgives. I will not,’ Dauphin County teen confronts her mother’s killer in court

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The Harrisburg man who shot his ex-girlfriend five times during an attack three years ago learned his fate in court Wednesday morning.

There was no discretion for Dauphin County Judge Ed Marsico to decide Brian McCullough’s sentence: The mandatory minimum sentence for first-degree murder under Pennsylvania law is life in prison.

So that was the sentence Marsico imposed after a 40-minute heart-wrenching hearing featuring the testimony of two children who lost their mom.

McCullough, 39, fired five to seven bullets into his girlfriend, Erika King, killing her at the tail-end of an hours-long argument, a jury ruled back in October. [Her body ended up next to Christmas wrapping paper on Dec 28, 2021 inside her home at 1816 Boas Street.](#)

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King's then 16-year-old daughter, La'Myra Randolph, called 911 from outside her mother's bedroom and told dispatchers McCullough was in her room. It was that 911 call, combined with her testimony, that did "80% of the work" in securing McCullough's conviction, according to prosecutor Steve Zawisky.

"I did not win this case. La'Myra did," Zawisky said. "The courage and strength she displayed is unparalleled. She will overcome anything."

Wednesday morning's hearing provided now 19-year-old Randolph and family members with the opportunity to confront McCullough directly.

Randolph took the stand and told Marsico about the trauma she endured.

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"I was 16 when I had to listen to my mom beg for her life and cry for help," Randolph said. "I hope Brian believes in Jesus. He forgives. I will not."

Randolph otherwise remained seated in the back of the courtroom and maintained a steely gaze.

Randolph's brother, a minor, also took the stand to share an opposing reaction.

"What he did was wrong," the teen said, acknowledging how unpopular his statement might be with other family members. "I love him with all my heart. I love you, Brian, and I forgive you with all my heart. I hope you find Jesus and he can grant you peace after death."

King's father, Miguel Ramos, is a retired law enforcement officer from New York.

"I've seen a lot of horrible things, but for my daughter to be executed... Erika was a wonderful girl," Ramos said. "I hope and pray (her children) come out through this."

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Patricia Smith, King's pastor and friend, took the stand next. Zawisky explained she, too, was crucial in presenting the case. Smith previously testified that King told her if she ever died, McCullough was her killer — and said that King asked her to look out for her children after she was gone.

"Erika King won," Smith said, hoping that every time the metal prison gates shut, McCullough instead hears gunshots going off.

"You did not take Erika's smile. You did not steal her humor. You did not steal her passion to help other people. You did not take her compassion and love for Jesus," Smith said.

Neither McCullough nor his family made any statements at the hearing. McCullough's attorney, Paul Kovatch, said there is loss on both sides of the courtroom; that McCullough's sister, brother and mother are losing him, as are his own children.

"He does have remorse, and does have sympathy for the case," Kovatch said.

Kovatch said he and McCullough intend to appeal the case, disputing the evidence submitted at trial as well as alleging the jury had been prejudiced against McCullough.

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Marsico delivered his own remarks in response to Wednesday's testimony

"I have never heard such a compelling 911 call. Her actions, under the most horrific circumstances, got justice in this case. (La'Myra) secured the conviction in this case," Marsico said.

"There is no closure in a case like this. Today, we close a large chapter: The criminal justice chapter. But the pain and suffering will go on."