

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: COUNCILLOR AND HIRED GUN SENTENCED FOR HUSBAND'S MURDER

Yesterday, the Western Cape High Court sitting in Oudtshoorn sentenced former ANC councillor and her hired gun to life imprisonment after convicting them for the murder of her husband. Magdalene Titus and Justice Mooi were sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Preston Titus and three years direct imprisonment for obstruction or defeating the ends of justice. The court ordered that the three years direct imprisonment sentence and the life imprisonment run concurrently.

Magdalene and Preston were married with children. The court heard that during November 2017, Magdalene, her driver and boyfriend attended a church function in Port Elizabeth. Whilst in Port Elizabeth, the boyfriend introduced Mooi to Magdalene and Magdalene requested to speak to him (Mooi) alone. She requested him to assist her in killing her husband.

Magdalene and her driver then returned to Oudtshoorn. She made a partial payment for the assassination. On 29 November 2017, Magdalene asked her friend to accommodate Mooi and his accomplice known only as Vusi while the murder was being planned. Later, she and her driver picked up Mooi and his accomplice at Oudtshoorn Cemetery where they were waiting for her. She took them to her house for them to scout the property. She requested that her husband be killed the next day. On the evening of 30 November 2017, the killers went to the deceased's property to execute him but they could not as he had two friends visiting. The killers went back to sleep. On 01 December 2017, she confronted them on why the mission was not carried out. They promised to carry it out that evening.

On the afternoon of 01 December 2017, Mooi, the accomplice and the driver who is known to Preston, went to his house. Magdalene lied to her husband that the driver and

two pastors would come to her house. When they arrived, the killers continued to pretend that they were pastors

The murder was not executed during the visit. They agreed that Magdalene would administer sleeping pills to her youngest daughter, Amorey Titus, and that she would inform the killers when it would be a suitable time to arrive at their home to kill Preston. It was further agreed that she would open the door for them and leave electronic devices in a bag for them to remove to make it appear to be a robbery. An amount of cash would also be left for them to take.

She informed the killers that it was a suitable time for the murder to be executed. She opened the door when they arrived. Preston was stabbed several times and was assaulted, amongst others, with a hammer. Pepper spray was also used during the attack. The wife was present during the attack, her youngest daughter, Amorey Titus, was asleep and her eldest daughter, Penelope Titus, was at a social gathering. The killers left and he succumbed to his injuries.

At about midnight, Penelope Titus, returned home and knocked several times. Magdalene pretended to discover her husband's body for the first time. As part of the pretense, she appeared to be hysterical and that woke her youngest daughter up. She continued her pretense when the police arrived. Mooi and the accomplice immediately left Oudtshoorn and disposed their bloodstained clothes and the weapons on the way towards Mossel Bay. On 02 December 2017, at about 05h00, the driver returned to Magdalene's house and she instructed him to collect her cleaner who was instructed to clean the property.

In the evening of 03 December 2017, the driver, Magdalene, her friend and boyfriend met at her house where cellphone information and messages were deleted. It was agreed that a vehicle that was used by the killers and the driver would be washed, the pepper spray would be disposed of. Mooi and Magdalene and two other implicated individuals were arrested. The other two were acquitted but Mooi and Magdalene were convicted on November 2019 for the brutal murder.

Advocate Christhenus van der Vijver argued during the trial that Mooi never even met Preston, yet he was prepared to kill him. "She agreed to pay him R30 000 for the assassination. One can just assume that he killed the deceased out of greed for the money offered. The deceased was defenseless and the attack was unprovoked. The manner in which he was killed was also of a very 'personal' nature in that he was attacked with knives where his attackers heard his screams for help, felt the knives

piercing his body and eventually felt how he succumbed to their repeated attacks and died a relatively slow agonizing death due to blood loss. He deceased was killed in the sanctity of his home. The callousness, cruelty and brutality of the attack, are all aggravating features. The state, therefore, requests the court to sentence both the accused to a term of life imprisonment for murder and an appropriate term of imprisonment on obstruction or defeating the ends of justice which will obviously run concurrently.”

The court agreed.

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