

ALERT

TOP STORY

Spotsy woman who stabbed her mother to death sentenced to 40 years

Keith Epps

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A Spotsylvania County woman who killed her mother in 2020 for reasons that remain unclear was ordered Monday to serve 40 years in prison.

Lisa Ann Hughes Harmon, 59, killed 73-year-old Sophie Rumuly on Oct. 5, 2020, at their home in the 6400 block of Plantation Forest Drive. The victim was stabbed multiple times in the chest and was nearly decapitated during the attack, prosecutors said.

Hughes Harmon had previously pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in Spotsylvania Circuit Court. Judge Ricardo Rigual called her actions “evil” and sentenced her to the maximum amount allowed by law.

According to evidence presented by prosecutor Crystal Montague-Holland and Commonwealth’s Attorney Travis Bird, Hughes Harmon has a 40-year history of criminal activity and drug addiction. Her mother had allowed her back into her home about 10 years before the slaying.

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Rumuly’s husband came home that night and found the gruesome scene. By then Hughes Harmon had showered, packed some things and asked a neighbor to care for her dog. She was sitting on her bedroom floor in a “yoga-type” position when deputies arrived, Detective J.D. Harris testified.

Harris said that after being taken to jail, Hughes Harmon made three admissions to the killing, including one in which she said she wasn’t going to kill anyone else.

Rumuly's granddaughter, Kayla Bullock, read an emotional statement that brought tears to many in the courtroom. Bullock, who is Hughes Harmon's daughter but was raised by Rumuly, described a childhood in which she spent countless hours hoping her mother would turn her life around.

Bullock said her childhood included being left alone in the car while her mother spent time in various motels, watching her mother shoot up drugs and being left alone with random men.

"Despite it all, I still loved and rooted for her," Bullock said.

Bullock said her grandmother's death has devastated the entire family and told Rigual she would be fearful for the safety of her and other family members if Hughes Harmon was ever released.

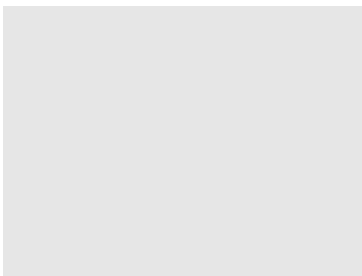
"I'll never understand why she did what she did," Bullock said.

Montague-Holland argued that the "gruesome" slaying called for the maximum sentence. She said Hughes Harmon murdered a woman who had been nothing but good to her and others.

Defense attorney Patricia Bolen asked the judge for a sentence at the low end of the recommended state sentencing guidelines, which was 15 years and seven months. She said her client has a long history of mental illness and is remorseful.

Hughes Harmon made a brief statement just before the judge announced the sentence in which she said she was sorry for what she'd done.

"I wasn't myself that day," she said. "I've lost my mother too, and I know I'll probably never see my family again."



Hughes Harmon

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