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Family of murdered transgender woman finally get justice ending nearly 5 year wait

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Family of murdered transgender woman sees her killer plead guilty

Albert Weathers pleaded guilty to killing 36-year-old Kelly Stough - a transgender woman, and leaving her body in the street near McNichols and Brush in Detroit, an area known for prostitution.

DETROIT (FOX 2) - A former pastor has pleaded guilty to murdering a transgender woman - providing a measure of justice for her family after nearly five years.

Albert Weathers pleaded guilty to killing 36-year-old Kelly Stough - a transgender woman, and leaving her body in the street near McNichols and Brush in Detroit, an area known for prostitution.

"I was glad - I just wanted to hear him admit it," said Jessica Williams, the victim's mother. "Did you say a prayer with her before you left her out in the street like trash? Did you at least hold her hand and tell her you're sorry?"

Kelly's family wants the world to know - she wasn't some castaway - she was very much loved.

"It's been heart-wrenching, Kelly was my first grandchild and we had a bond, a serious, tight bond," said Patricia Hale, Kelly's grandmother.

"I don't want her to be what society may have a picture of trans women of color - they're not throw-a-ways - they're not people who people have forgotten," said Williams. "They all have a backstory and I think that's something that needs to be

realized.

"She was cared for - she was loved."

Born Tristan Stough, he was raised in the church, and grew to be 6 foot 4. He got a scholarship and played college football but left after a couple of years - instead wanting a career in fashion.

"I personally told her to be the best version of herself that she could be, own it, just live your life and be happy," said Hale.

While in school in Chicago, Tristan studied fashion and found a community of authenticity - and eventually told her family she was transgender. People called her Kelly.

"I was glad for her - i was proud of her to own who she was and to be her true self," Williams said.

As to why the pastor shot Kelly Stough in the early morning hours of December 7, 2018 - we may never know. But Kelly's family hopes Pastor Albert Weathers tries to make things right - he's facing eight years in prison for second-degree murder and two years for felony firearm.

"How tortured are you to lead such a duplicitous life - to the point where you were willing to cover up what you did to take this life," Hale said. "How dare you.

"Clearly he's attracted to that population so own it. Own it - and maybe change your life."

Kelly's family is grateful to the Wayne County Prosecutor and Wayne County Bictim Advocate for the Transgender Community, Julisa Abad for sticking with the case that was finally about to go to trial on Monday.

"I am glad that there was a conviction - justice was finally served," Abad said. "You just don't know the lives that people live and it goes again to the social stigma that my community experiences - particularly trans women of color."

Women like Kelly Stough - whose lives - matter.

"My sister never wavered in her commitment to her child- as a person first," said Gerri Miller. "And that's what i would encourage families to do - look beyond the social stigmas."

"Stick by your kid - stand with them," said Williams. "You had them - they're yours - and support them."

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