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17-year-old pleads to manslaughter charge in fatal shooting

Sean Rossman, Tallahassee Democrat 6:51 p.m. EST November 6, 2014



A 17-year-old who fired a shot that killed his friend at a northeast Tallahassee home last year pleaded no contest Thursday afternoon to a manslaughter charge.

Logan Murphy will spend between 18 and 36 months in a Florida Department of Juvenile Justice facility followed by 15 years of probation during which he'll be barred from having a firearm. Murphy received the jail time for violating his probation on two previous charges when he shot 17-year-old Robert Butler. He'll serve the probation charge for the shooting.

Murphy told Leon County Sheriff's Office investigators that he, Butler, and another student were "dry firing" a semi-automatic pistol by racking the slide and pulling the trigger on Sept. 21, 2013. The three were passing the weapon around and Murphy believed it was unloaded when it was his turn. The gun fired when Murphy pulled the trigger and Butler fell to the ground.

Deputies arrived to find Butler, a former Lincoln High School student, screaming for help and bleeding from the chest.

Murphy, who was then 16, was charged as an adult.

Robin Butler, Robert's mother, told the court today she disagreed with the portion of the plea agreement that withholds a felony conviction in the case.

"There's no replacing Bobby. I don't want it to be lost that a human being, my son, died. His future is over," she said. "And what's left is a distraught, destroyed family."

Murphy read a letter before the court expressing his sorrow.

"I never would have thought anything like this would ever happen," Murphy said. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about what has happened."

Murphy's attorney Tim Jansen spoke for the family Thursday.

"There are no winners today," he said. "Society lost and we can only educate our kids to be safe around guns and not use guns."

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