

Shot youth's mother brands Greek policeman 'monster'

The mother of Alexandros Grigoropoulos - the Greek schoolboy shot dead in 2008 - has called the policeman who fired the fatal bullet a "monster". Tzina Tsalikian told a court that Epaminondas Korkoneas deliberately shot her 15-year-old son, who had as much value to them "as a cockroach".



Epaminondas Korkoneas is accused of murdering a 15-year-old schoolboy

Forensic evidence

Speaking at the trial in her first public comments since the shooting, Mrs Tsalikian said both defendants were "monsters in the guise of men".

She described her son as "a quiet child who trusted the police".

There is no dispute that Mr Korkoneas fired the shot that fatally pierced the schoolboy's heart in December 2008.

The prosecution says the policeman aimed directly at the boy, but the veteran police officer argues he had responded to youths throwing objects at his squad car

by firing a warning shot which ricocheted fatally.

"I don't accept liability for anyone's death," he told the court on Friday.

The key forensic evidence will be the ballistic tests on the bullet, says the BBC's Greece correspondent Malcolm Brabant.

These should indicate whether the bullet ricocheted off a building or parking bollard in the street where Alexandros Grigoropoulos fell.

Important testimony is expected to come from the teenager's friends who were with him in the rebellious Athenian district of Exarchia when the shooting took place, our correspondent adds.

The boy's family have been hurt by accusations made shortly after his death that Alexandros was a troublemaker.

Passage of justice

Both the boy's family and the main police union have objected to the trial taking place so far from Athens.

The family believes the distance will make it difficult for key witnesses to at-

tend. The police union regards the move as an insult that implies officers could not guarantee security in the Greek capital.

The Greek police union believes the trial is a vital process in rebuilding trust between civilians and the force.

Union president Christos Fotopoulos said society had to be convinced that there had been a fair passage of justice.

"If the public believes there is a fair and proper trial, and the defendants receive proper justice, then this will improve relations between the police and society," he told the BBC.

The restricted number of access roads into Amfissa has given the authorities a chance to prevent large numbers of potential rioters from getting through.

But shopkeepers in the town have pulled down the shutters in fear that they will bear the brunt of anti-establishment wrath.

The trial, which was adjourned after several hours of testimony and is set to resume next week, is expected to last several months.

Basic legalities of property purchasing in Greece

The procedure of buying property in Greece includes various stages, some of which are the same or similar to the procedure of purchasing property in other countries.

However, there are a few details which, it would be wise for every buyer to be aware of, as they could save him a considerable amount of money, time and hassle. A basic condition for the purchase of property in Greece is, in mostly all cases, the obligatory presence of a lawyer, who counsels the buyer on the legal validity of the property titles and about other matters pertaining to the transaction.

Another basic parameter is that the purchase of property can only take place at a notary public office, with the signing of a contract document, which will then be transcribed to the mortgage bureau or land registry office of the area, or else the purchase will be invalid and even if a money transaction has taken place, the buyer might still not own



the property. This has to be noted because in some countries in which expats reside and their children and/or grandchildren have been born, the facts are slightly different and there might be confusion concerning what the facts are in Greece.

Every buyer of property in Greece, who does not live in Greece permanently, and hence does not declare any taxable income, must be able to prove with documents, where s/he found the money to purchase the property. Sufficient proof for this is the importing of foreign exchange from abroad to a greek bank in Greece, which is proven with the "little pink slip", ie. the only token for foreign exchange imports. This

receipt, which is only given out once by the bank in Greece, is to be deposited with the Tax Office the following year of the purchase and it proves that the expat imported foreign exchange to Greece from his country of residence abroad.

If the expat buyer of the property has not imported foreign exchange from abroad, neither has enough declared income from previous years in Greece to cover the cost of the property, taxes and the legal costs, then he risks the Tax Office assuming he bought the property with undeclared income in Greece and to tax him on that along with a fine.

A second important detail in buying property in Greece is that the

transfer tax is waived for first-time home buyers. Normally, the tax a buyer must pay when purchasing property is about 10%, but could be as much as 19% VAT for newly built properties. If, however the buyer is purchasing his first home and does not own any land, apartment or house in his name, he can be excluded from paying the tax.

Expats are entitled to the same waiver, whether or not they reside permanently in Greece, on the condition that they are registered in a registry book of a municipality of Greece. This is important, because there are many second and third generation expats, who are born outside of Greece and have not been registered at the Consuls, nor in any municipality of Greece, and that could cost them the waiver, and in turn would mean they would have to pay the transfer tax or VAT amounting to several thousands of euro, which they could have saved.



Wife planned to have her husband killed, court told

A MAN stabbed several times after celebrating his birthday this month was allegedly targeted by his wife and another man. Chris Soteriou was stabbed late on January 2 after leaving a restaurant and returning to his car in Rose Street, Fitzroy. Police allege that his wife, Vicky Soteriou, of Watsonia North, and Ari Dimitrakis, of Donvale, conspired to murder him between December 1 last year and January 2 this year. Mr Soteriou remains in the Royal Melbourne Hospital in a stable condition. Vicky Soteriou, 43, and Dimitrakis, 48, are charged with attempted murder, conspiracy to murder, intentionally and recklessly causing serious injury, intentionally and recklessly causing injury and assault.

Soteriou has also been charged with one count of attempting to pervert the course of justice. Police allege she gave false and misleading information about the attempted murder of her husband. Soteriou failed to appear in the Melbourne Magistrates Court. Her lawyer, Alexis Bebbington, said she was unwell and there were concerns about her psychological state. Ms Bebbington told magistrate Jack Vandersteen that security staff at the Melbourne Custody Centre and mental health nurses had advised that Soteriou was unable to attend court. Mr Vandersteen, who with Ms Bebbington and prosecutor Ella Piper saw Soteriou in the custody cells, noted that Soteriou was at risk of self-harm, may have a psychological illness or disability and was vulnerable due to her age and appearance. Neither of the two applied for bail and they were remanded to reappear in April for committal mention. Police postponed an application to conduct a forensic procedure on Dimitrakis until his next court appearance.

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