

TAN LEAD SANE MURDER

A killing fuelled by jealousy

Sentencing adjourned six months for psychiatrist to monitor Wu's mental state

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COMPARED to the life she had had, her brother-in-law and his wife seemed "to be living a blessed life with strong support and love" from her mother-in-law.

Fuelled by jealousy, Wu Yun Yun harboured thoughts of killing one of them.

On Friday, the court heard her story for the first time as Wu, the wife of opposition party member Tan Lead Shake, pleaded guilty to two charges: Culpable homicide not amounting to murder for stabbing Tan Lead Sane, 33, and attempted culpable homicide for attacking Huang Meizhe, 36.

Wu, 26, suffers from major depression, which qualified her for the defence of diminished responsibility, the High Court heard.

Born in China, she arrived here at the age of 19. Her memories of her home were "characterised by a tearful recall of her parents quarrelling and her having to leave vocational school because of the family's financial problems", according to her psychiatric report.



Wu Yun Yun's father (left) and brother-in-law discussing her case with lawyers. ERNEST CHUA

She experienced mood swings and suicidal thoughts in secondary school but became happier when she began work as a telephone operator. She liked her job and formed a close attachment to a colleague who was interested in her.

Then, it was arranged for her to marry Lead Shake.

She told Dr George Joseph Fernandez, a senior consultant psychiatrist from the Institute of Mental Health who interviewed her, that she felt "all the people in the world had left me" when she arrived in Singapore.

Wu had difficulties adjusting to life here because of the "different types of food, difficulties in communication in English, and a virtual absence of friends". She was unhappy in her new home, which she shared with Lead Shake's family. She told Dr Fernandez: "I hated to stay at home. Mother-in-law and sister-in-law are very calculative. Mother-in-law and sister-in-law say things to hurt me."

During her seven years here, Wu returned to China four times. Her father told Dr Fernandez she was thinner and more irritable at each visit.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Diane Tan said Wu had struggled with the thought of killing Lead Sane or Mdm Huang "for several weeks".

About two weeks before the offence occurred on June 28 last year, Wu bought a fruit knife and hid it in a box beneath the kitchen sink. The afternoon before she attacked them, she retrieved the knife and hid it on top of her wardrobe. At about 5.30am, she opened the couple's door, called Mdm Huang's name and stabbed her twice in the neck.

The victim's husband was awakened by her cries. Wu then attacked him and stabbed him twice in his chest and once in his abdomen. She then cut her mother-in-law Ng Bee Hion, who tried to stop her from leaving the house.

Both Mdm Ng and Mdm Huang were in court yesterday. Mdm Huang broke down in tears as Wu's charges were read out and was tearful throughout the hearing.

A third charge of voluntarily causing hurt to Mdm Ng will be taken into consideration for sentencing, which Justice Kan Ting Chiu adjourned for six months to allow Dr Fernandez to monitor Wu's mental state. The psychiatrist testified that he needed this time to see if her condition improves.

Wu has been in remand since she was arrested.

From 18 months to 1 day ...

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Her sentence remained the same, and the \$2,000 fine was for her second charge, which the judge reduced from one of causing grievous hurt by a rash act to dangerous driving.

Justice Choo, who became a full judge in 2003 after serving as judicial commissioner since 1995, said that it was "not right to increase her jail term to the detriment of the accused" in lieu of the mistaken fine. He added that the case "should not be seen as a precedent". He did not elaborate.

Lim's counsel, Mr Subhas Anandan, said he blamed himself as he had asked the court for a heavy fine instead of jail, which may have "misled" the judge. Mr Subhas, who has more than 30 years of experience, said he felt something was amiss after the judgment. When he realised his client could not be fined for the charge, he called Justice Choo's secretary.

The judge had ruled that the nature of the case "lay in (Lim's) failure to keep a lookout" and a harsh custodial sentence is warranted "only when the offender had endangered the lives of others in a rash manner like speeding".



Shin Min Daily
News editor
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ERNEST CHUA.

Lim committed her offence when she drove past a red light at the junction of Whitley and Dunearn roads and knocked into a motorcycle. The rider, retiree David Pattisellano, suffered a compound fracture in his leg and now needs crutches to move around.

His 24-year-old maid Melania Melaniawati, who was riding pillion and had arrived in Singapore one week before the accident, died from injuries sustained in the collision.

Justice Choo said: "A rash act should be distinguished from a negligent act in the state of mind of the accused ... It appears that (Lim) did not know that the light was red against her and the motorcyclist had moved."

He added: "Careless driving may well be dangerous though not all careless driving is dangerous driving." While the court "does not attempt to lay down what is and what is not dangerous driving", it must consider the danger posed to other road users "in the prevailing circumstances".

Justice Choo said that in the trial before the district courts last July, the prosecution "was not trying to prove the accused was speeding or beat a red light intentionally. Their case is that the accident happened because the accused failed to keep a lookout." In his opinion, Lim was "more negligent than rash".

She is banned from holding or obtaining a driving licence for any vehicle class for 10 years. Mr Subhas said Lim, who was calm and composed during the judgment, will donate the \$10,000 returned to her to charity.



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