

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

September 25, 2013

Graham found competent to stand trial in slaying

Interviews with psychologists cited in judge's determination

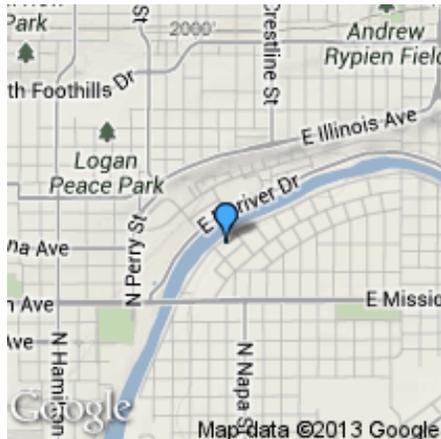
Jonathan Brunt

The Spokesman-Review

Tags: Avondre Graham Centennial Trial Maryann Moreno Charlotte McGill Tuffy's Trail



Avondre C. Graham is led from the courtroom on Tuesday after Spokane County Superior Court Judge Maryann Moreno ruled Graham is competent to stand trial for the killing of Charlotte McGill.



A young man accused of killing a woman as she walked her dog along the Spokane River last year will stand trial for second-degree murder.

Spokane County Superior Court Judge Maryann Moreno ruled Tuesday that Avondre C. Graham, 18, is competent to face criminal charges.

Graham is accused of killing Charlotte McGill, 55, who was walking near her apartment complex in the 1800 block of East South Riverton Avenue when she was stabbed nine times on May 3, 2012. Graham, who also lived at the apartment complex, was arrested four months later after he allegedly attacked another woman along the Centennial Trail that September. Although he was a juvenile at the time, he has been charged as an adult. Court records say that he admitted to stabbing McGill when he was interviewed by detectives.

Graham's defense lawyer, Tom Krzyminski, argued that his client is incapable of understanding the proceedings against him and unable to assist in his own defense.

But Moreno disagreed and noted other cases in which defendants had even lower IQs and were deemed competent to stand trial. She said that in interviews with psychologists Graham appeared to understand the role of the judge and attorneys and understood the severity of charges he faces.

If he had been deemed incompetent, Graham could have been committed to a mental institution.

Prosecutors argued that tests showed Graham has a basic comprehension of the legal system and has an ability to learn.

Two psychologists evaluated Graham to determine his competency. Both agreed that he is not psychotic, suffers from mild retardation and has an IQ of about 60. But they disagreed on whether his intelligence is so low that he would be unable to assist his defense attorney. Under state law, defendants must be able to assist in their defense to stand trial.

Moreno said Graham has a long record of mental evaluations. Reports indicate that Graham has low intelligence and suffers from depression.

She also said Graham was treated multiple times at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center for depression and suicidal episodes, including in February 2012 after assaulting his girlfriend and threatening to kill his mother.

Graham also faces assault charges in two other attacks along the Centennial Trail last summer.

Get more news and information at [Spokesman.com](http://www.spokesman.com)