



Christopher Grant Convicted in Federal Court for the Murder of Illinois State Trooper Nicholas Hopkins

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS, Ill. – The U.S. Attorney's Office announced today that Christopher R. Grant, 47, of East St. Louis, faces the possibility of life without parole following his guilty plea earlier today to a series of federal charges in connection with the 2019 murder of Illinois State Trooper Nicholas Hopkins.

Trooper Hopkins, 33, was killed in the line of duty while attempting to execute a state search warrant at Grant's house in East St. Louis. Appearing in federal district court today, Grant pled guilty to six federal crimes, including using a firearm to commit murder in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

“From the first hours of this investigation, the U.S. Attorney's Office has pledged to vigorously pursue justice for Trooper Hopkins and his family,” said U.S. Attorney

Steven D. Weinhoeft. “Today’s conviction is an important step toward keeping that solemn promise. Our thoughts and prayers remain with his family, and we will continue our work to honor his sacrifice.”

On March 18, 2020, a federal grand jury returned an eight-count indictment against Grant, charging him with distributing crack cocaine (3 counts), maintaining a drug house, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, use of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, and use of a firearm to commit murder in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. Prosecutors agreed to dismiss the charges for possessing and using a firearm during a federal drug crime after Grant pleaded guilty to murder, although the dismissal of those lesser counts does not change the statutory penalties Grant faces.

Leading up to the murder, an Illinois State Police investigation showed that Grant was selling marijuana and crack cocaine from his home on North 42nd Street, in East St. Louis. Officers conducted a series of controlled purchases of crack cocaine from Grant and obtained a search warrant to search his house. The ISP SWAT Team was called in to help execute the warrant after it was learned that Grant had a cache of weapons inside. On the morning of Aug. 23, 2019, Trooper Hopkins and two other SWAT Team members went onto Grant’s porch to connect chains from the front hooks of a police Ford F350 to a set of steel bars protecting the front door.

Officers were preparing to forcibly remove the steel bars from the door frame so they could enter through the front door. Grant later told officers that he was sleeping on the couch in the living room close to the front door when the activity on the porch woke him up. Grant claimed that he suspected someone was there to rob him, as he had been robbed of cash and drugs roughly two weeks earlier. As part of his guilty plea, he admitted that he had been sleeping on a .9 mm handgun and that he fired the gun three times towards whoever was on his porch. Trooper Hopkins had just finished connecting the chain to the steel bars on the front of the house and was turning to walk back down the steps when one of Grant’s gunshots passed through the wooden door and struck him in the head, entering through his right temple.

Officers returned directed fire as other ISP SWAT Team members rushed to Hopkins’ rescue. He was transported to St. Louis University Hospital, but all life-saving efforts were unsuccessful, and he was pronounced dead at 6:10 p.m. on Aug. 23, 2019. A later search of the house recovered eight firearms, including an AR-15 rifle, an AK-47 rifle, and five handguns.

Grant’s DNA was found on the murder weapon: a Glock Model 19, 9 mm pistol. Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 9, 2021. Using a firearm to commit murder in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime is punishable by at least 10 years and up to life in

prison. Chief United States District Judge Nancy J. Rosenstengel will determine the sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

This case is being investigated by the Illinois State Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives. U.S. Attorney Steven D. Weinhoeft and Assistant U. S. Attorney Ali M. Summers are prosecuting the case.