

Girl Who Performed at Inauguration Killed in Chicago Shooting

A 15-year-old Chicago girl who performed at President Barack Obama's inauguration last week was shot to death in a city park in what police think was a case of "mistaken identity" related to a gang turf war.

"Mistaken identity—wrong place at the wrong time," Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy said at a press conference on Wednesday, a day after the shooting that killed Hadiya Pendleton and injured another teen. The press conference was broadcast by CLTV.

McCarthy said police have been interviewing witnesses who were standing near Pendleton in a park on the city's South Side. He said police were making progress in the investigation.

"I don't want this to be a three-week or a three-month investigation," said McCarthy, who was in Washington earlier this week addressing **gun control**. "I want this closed now ... I want that kid off the street," he said, referring to the killer. Police believe a handgun was used.

Pendleton, a sophomore at Martin Luther King Jr. College Prep, had performed at the inauguration with her school band, according to local media reports. News of her death near Obama's old home in the Kenwood neighborhood came before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee began hearings on gun control on Wednesday.

Gun violence in Chicago has been in the national spotlight over the past year, with 506 murders in 2012, an increase of 17 percent over the previous year. So far in January, there have been 42 homicides and 157 shootings, according to Chicago

police.

Obama spokesman Jay Carney was asked about Pendleton's death Wednesday. He said the **prayers** of the president and the first lady were with the girl's family.

"The president has more than once, when he talks about gun violence in American, referred not just to the horror of Newtown or Aurora or Virginia Tech or Oak Creek, but to shootings on the corner in Chicago and other parts of the country," said Carney. "And this is just another example of the problem that we need to deal with."

McCarthy said that an \$11,000 reward has been offered for information leading to the capture of Pendleton's killer.

Former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, shot in the head in a 2011 mass shooting, made an emotional plea before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday for action to curb U.S. gun violence, but a National Rifle Association executive said new gun laws have failed in the past and would fail again.

Giffords opened testimony at the first congressional hearing on gun violence since the Dec. 14 massacre in which a gunman shot dead 20 children and six adults at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut.

Responding to outrage across the country following that incident, Obama and other Democrats have asked Congress to pass the largest package of gun restrictions in decades.

Speaking at the news conference in Chicago, Father Michael Pfleger, a Catholic priest known for his activism against gun violence, compared the Chicago shootings to Newtown.

"This is Sandy Hook. This is Connecticut. This is Newtown, right here. We have to be just as outraged," Pfleger said.

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