Victim helps press for longer sentence for nurse in 'nude therapy' case

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Linda Kaufman, a nurse convicted of defrauding and abusing the mentally ill residents of the Newton home she ran with her husband, Arlan, told a federal judge she has been a positive influence on fellow inmates during her four years in prison.

But a former resident of the home said Kaufman still needs to be held accountable for what happened there.

Not because she "married a monster," said Nancy Jensen, but because Kaufman was a registered nurse.

"She was to do no harm, and she was to advocate for the people that she was to help," Jensen said.

The statements came Tuesday in the courtroom of U.S. District Judge Monti Belot, who has been required by the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals to reconsider factors that could lengthen the seven-year prison sentence he originally imposed on Kaufman.

After a two-hour hearing, Belot took the matter under advisement and said he'd make his ruling in a written memorandum. He didn't say when he'd issue it.

Linda Kaufman, 66, and Arlan Kaufman were convicted in November 2006 of enslaving the home's residents, forcing them to work naked and perform sex acts. Belot gave Arlan Kaufman a 30-year sentence and Linda Kaufman a seven-year sentence.

The appeals court said Belot should reconsider Linda Kaufman's sentence because she was alleged to have used a stun gun, which the government said was a dangerous weapon; because the offenses involved a large number of vulnerable victims; and because she obstructed justice by interfering with a federal audit and investigation of the home.

The government has recommended a sentence of at least 20 years. Kaufman's attorney, Steve Gradert, asked Belot to reimpose his original sentence.

That sentence was below sentencing guidelines. Belot had shown her leniency, believing she was manipulated by her husband.

At the hearing, Gradert argued that the stun gun the government alleges Kaufman used wasn't produced at the trial, that the device described during the trial by a patient wasn't necessarily a stun gun, that the witness wasn't credible, and that a stun gun isn't considered a dangerous weapon.

Phil McManigal, a special agent in the Kansas Attorney General's Office, who was called to testify by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tanya Treadway, said a resident of the Kaufmans' home called "Peter" identified a photo of a stun gun that McManigal had printed off the Internet in August as being similar to the device Kaufman allegedly used.

Another government witness, Kenneth McGuire, a guard at the El Dorado Correctional Facility who has used a stun gun and been on the receiving end of one as part of his training, testified that he considered the guns dangerous weapons if improperly used.

Jensen, in an emotional statement, said the Kaufmans "did horrible things to us in the name of mental health and in the name of taking care of clients."

Linda Kaufman was a nurse who was responsible for taking care of people with mental illnesses, she said.

"The harm that she did is not easily seen because it was emotional and affected our behavior and our belief systems," Jensen said. "She used our diagnosis to blame us and abuse us. So, therefore, Linda knew how to hide the harm she caused us and blamed us for."

Gradert, who was allowed to question Jensen over intense objections by Treadway, got Jensen to say that Linda Kaufman sometimes showed compassion to her and other residents, whereas Arlan Kaufman did not.

Treadway followed by having Jensen tell the court she had checked into Prairie View, a mental health hospital, because of the way the Kaufmans had treated her.**

Linda Kaufman told Belot that during her confinement she had done a lot of volunteer and self-improvement activities.

She had coexisted peacefully with other inmates, had no disciplinary reports, worked faithfully at her prison jobs and received high scores for her job performance and cooperation, she said.

She also participated in continuing education and religious classes.

She said she won a humanitarian award last year for her work with inmates and for her quilting.

Kaufman said if she had another chance, she "would do many things differently," but she was looking to the future.

"I long to join, and re-join, my grandchildren as soon as possible," she said.

Treadway said Kaufman's future would be far better than the future she had offered her victims.

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