

Saturday, 09/29/07

## **Jury finds Negligent Homicide in Koulis Case**

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FRANKLIN — The two-week trial of Dr. Christ Koulis in the overdose death of his girlfriend ended Friday with a verdict of criminally negligent homicide.

The offense carries a maximum sentence of two years in prison. Had the jury found Koulis guilty of second-degree murder, the verdict sought by the prosecution, he would have faced up to 25 years. He is to be sentenced Nov. 13.

A former plastic surgeon, Koulis could receive additional jail time in Kentucky if he is found to have violated his probation there. Koulis pleaded guilty in 2002 to unlawful distribution of a controlled substance.

"I'm relieved it's over and accept the verdict of the jury," Koulis said. "It's tragic Lesa died. It should have never happened."

Lesa Buchanan, 35, died July 4, 2005. Prosecutors said her death was caused by an injection of the painkiller oxycodone during a marathon weekend of sex with Koulis at her Cool Springs apartment. They claimed Koulis injected her with the drug.

Defense attorneys said Buchanan was a drug addict who suffered a lung condition and took "one too many" injections. Koulis said Buchanan injected herself.

Buchanan's sister, Tara Bentley, said the verdict wasn't what her family was hoping for, but that she was grateful Koulis was "at least held responsible" for the death. "My prayer is that he can never do this to anyone else," Bentley said.

Koulis' attorney, David Raybin, said his client would appeal. Raybin was critical of the way police handled the case.

Williamson County Circuit Court Judge Jeff Bivins raised Koulis' bail from \$250,000 to \$500,000. Koulis is free to travel within the country.

District Attorney General Kim Helper said Koulis could be sentenced to five years if convicted of violating the probation he was serving on that charge.

Jurors spent nearly eight hours deliberating on Friday. They had seen approximately 270 exhibits, watched a two-hour video of Koulis and Buchanan having sex, and heard nine days of testimony.