

Sentencing of ex-doctor brings no peace to family

Dead mother's family pleads for maximum sentence in 2005 overdose 12/06/07

BY AMANDA N. MAYNORD amaynord@nashvillecitypaper.com

The daughter of Lesa Buchanan urged a Williamson County judge yesterday to give Christ Koulis, 40, the maximum sentence for the death of her mother in 2005.

"There is no peace, she is gone," Jessica Buchanan, 16, testified.

Koulis, a former doctor, was sentenced to two years in state prison for his connection in the death of Lesa Buchanan, who died of a lethal drug overdose July 4, 2005, in her Franklin, Tenn. apartment.

However, Koulis will remain free on \$500,000 bond after filing an immediate appeal to the ruling yesterday afternoon. His attorneys also made a motion to acquit and for a new trial, both of which were denied by Circuit Court Judge Jeff Bivins.

Assistant District Attorney General Kim Helper, lead prosecutor in the case, said the appeal process could take six months to a year.

Koulis was with Lesa Buchanan the weekend of her death engaging in what has been described in court as a "sex marathon." Lesa Buchanan at the time was using narcotics, according to the court, and prosecutors contend that Koulis injected her with the last lethal dose.

Lesa Buchanan's mother Peggy Roberts urged the court to sentence Koulis to time behind bars to prevent him from harming any other women like her daughter.

"I plead with you, do not fail to protect other women from this man's addictions," Roberts said. "Please do not allow him to continue to prey upon other women."

Koulis would not comment on the ruling outside the courtroom, but his attorney David Raybin said Lesa Buchanan's death was an accident and his client was not responsible.

"Look, he's an innocent man," Raybin said. "He testified in court — he didn't have to testify, but he did."

Koulis testified during the sentencing hearing yesterday morning after prosecuting attorneys divulged that a search of his computer revealed visits to Match.com, a dating Web site, only days after his girlfriend's death.

He contends that Lesa Buchanan had a profile on the Web site and he was searching for it to print out and preserve for evidence.

“No words of mine can lessen their pain, but I am truly sorry for any action of mine that may have contributed to that,” Koulis said following testimony from Lesa Buchanan’s family.

Koulis said he and his girlfriend had become addicted to narcotics in 2002 and within six weeks both needed treatment for their addictions. He said they both attended the same treatment facility in Kentucky, where they were living at the time, and that Lesa Buchanan cut her treatment short.

Jessica Buchanan said Koulis’ accounts are lies and that her mother was a “wonderful person.” Outside the courtroom, Jessica told media that she didn’t mind staring Koulis down while on the witness stand and that his lies “won’t bring my family down.”

According to Helper, Koulis is also facing legal action in Kentucky after his conviction in this case essentially violated his probation for illegally administering drugs to patients in Kentucky in 2002.

Helper said she has been in contact with the Assistant District Attorney in Kentucky and she would be notifying them of the judge’s ruling in this case in hopes that they pursue criminal charges.

“It is my understanding that once they receive [the signed judgment] they will proceed with a probation violation warrant based on the case up in Kentucky,” Helper said.

Lesa Buchanan’s mother and sister said outside the courtroom they wanted to get back to their lives and they both hope “Kentucky does the right thing.” CP



Koulis (center) listens during the hearing.



Former doctor Christ Koulis testifies.