

Kravetz sentenced to 26 years in prison



STEVEN FRIEDERICH | THE VIDETTE

Sitting next to public defender David Arcuri, Steven Daniel Kravetz refuses to sign some of the paperwork after his sentencing, including provisions that won't allow him to vote in the future. The judge noted that it really didn't matter what Kravetz signed or didn't sign.



Steven Friederich | The Vidette

Judge Brosey sentences Steven Daniel Kravetz to 26 years in prison for attacking a deputy and a judge in the Grays Harbor County Courthouse last March.



**By Brionna Friedrich
The Daily World**

In sentencing Steven D. Kravetz Friday to 26 years in prison for assaulting a deputy and a Superior Court judge last year, Lewis County Judge Richard Brosey didn't mince words.

"No one is out to get you Mr. Kravetz. You're a nuisance," Brosey said. "I don't know what it was that caused the obsession that you apparently have with Grays Harbor County and the people that work here."

Kravetz went to the courthouse March 9, 2012, the day he stabbed and shot Dep. Polly Davin and stabbed Judge David Edwards, to try and sneak into the clerk's office and steal his file from a misdemeanor case, hoping to find evidence of a conspiracy against him.

"That was a ludicrous idea in the first place," Brosey said.

Kravetz was found guilty by a Lewis County jury last month of first-degree assault against Davin, when he shot her with her own gun, second-degree assault against Edwards and disarming a law enforcement officer. They also issued special findings for the use of a firearm and a knife, adding five years and one year, respectively, to whatever sentence Brosey handed down.

That six years of extra time is not eligible for any reduction for good behavior, and the rest of Kravetz's sentence will only be eligible for a 10 percent reduction because he is convicted of serious violent offenses. He'll serve at least 24 years in prison.

"This is the last step," Davin said Friday. "It's just such a relief to have it all done. The trial itself opened up some wounds. There was a lot of stress with the trial."

Davin testified during Kravetz's trial, but made no statement during Friday's hearing.

"A danger"

"I've never hated Mr. Kravetz through this. It's not a personal thing. But he is a danger and the public needs to be protected," she said.

"Absolutely none of this had to happen. There was no reason for this cockeyed scheme to come down here and take the files and spirit them away," Brosey said.

"The front door was right there. Back in those days, the front door was wide open. If you wanted to break off the engagement ... all you had to do was go out the front door. It was a very simple process."

Instead, Kravetz attacked Davin, taking her to the ground and swinging a knife at her. Edwards intervened, fighting with Kravetz and eventually being stabbed in the back of the neck.

"The knife came out very, very rapidly, and you had no hesitancy whatsoever in stabbing Dep. Davin and Judge Edwards," Brosey noted. "Quite frankly, if it wasn't for the interference of Judge Edwards, you probably would have killed her."

Prosecutor Stew Menefee argued at Friday's sentencing in Grays Harbor Superior Court that Kravetz didn't only attack Edwards and Davin that day.

"The community of Grays Harbor was a victim of this as well," Menefee said. After the attacks, many people were afraid to come in for jury duty or to testify, he claimed.

"As a result of his actions, your honor, we no longer have an open and accessible courthouse, at least not to the extent we did" for more than 100 years, he continued, referring to courthouse security added since last year's attacks.

"You no longer can look up that great marble stairway all the way up to the third floor. Now you have to come into a side door, you have to go through a metal detector, and there are armed courthouse security."

Longer sentence sought

Menefee asked for a 30-year sentence.

Because the first-degree assault was on a law enforcement officer, Brosey had wide discretion to issue a sentence over the standard range of 10 years, nine months to 14 years, three months.

Kravetz spoke for the first time at length in open court, asking to delay sentencing because he had been moved from Lewis County Jail to Stafford Creek Corrections Center last week. Grays Harbor County has a contract with the state Department of Corrections to house prisoners with special circumstances.

He said he wanted another attorney to make unspecified court filings on his behalf before he was sentenced, and he hadn't been able to complete that process in time.

He complained about his treatment at the prison, noting he only had two days where he was able to coordinate with his mother about his defense, and was kept in solitary confinement.

"My treatment there was the same as a prisoner, as it is a prison," Kravetz said, reading from a lengthy written statement. "I had the legal right until sentencing to be treated like a defendant, not a prisoner."

He criticized the way his attorney, David Arcuri, had handled his case at trial, accusing him going easy on courthouse staff who testified "because of his relationship with the courthouse itself. ... I don't think he wants any retaliation of any kind."

Kravetz accused witnesses of lying about him and said Arcuri didn't press them hard enough. Arcuri works as a public defender in Grays Harbor and Lewis counties.

Interview with detectives

Brosey noted that most of the case against Kravetz came from the videotape of a six-hour interview with detectives, which was played in full during the trial. He denied the request to delay sentencing.

"I have to say in all honesty that the assertion that any testimony from the live witnesses ... who are employees of the Grays Harbor County Courthouse coming in and lying about what took place, is not supported whatsoever by what was on the tape and what came out of your own mouth," Brosey said. "I don't think there's any merit to your assertion that Mr. Arcuri in any way went easy on witnesses testifying against you because they perjured themselves."

Arcuri called the notion "laughable."

"I don't pull my punches. I didn't pull my punches in this case. I'm not afraid of any retribution from any judges," he said.

Arcuri asked for the minimum sentence, more than 16 years in all, and criticized the case as "overcharged from the start" as attempted murder. He disputed Menefee's version of the crime as an attack on the community.

"This is not an anti-government militia man armed for battle against the government. ... Mr. Kravetz is an untreated, delusional, paranoid schizophrenic," he said. "Anyone who would scoff at that sentence doesn't understand mental disorders and defects. This is more than about cause and effects and results. It's about justice."

"Is it a just sentence to sentence an untreated, paranoid, delusional schizophrenic to 30 years in prison for what happened in a matter of a couple of minutes?"

Judges' secretary testifies

Assistant Superior Court Administrator and secretary to the judges, Rita Zastrow, was one of the people who spotted Kravetz acting strangely the day of the attacks and the one who went to ask Edwards to come out of his office to take a look. She offered a different perspective on Kravetz.

"It was your silent determination in killing the person before you that I cannot forget," she said in a statement directed at Kravetz.

When Kravetz shot Davin, Zastrow recalled, "I saw her body rise off the floor and ripple from the impact. I saw the smile spread across your face as there was no doubt in your mind, or mine, that she was dead."

"If there was any reason I was part of this event, it is so I could stand before the court" and tell her story, she said.

"I know only too well that you will kill if given the opportunity," Zastrow said. "No one can possibly know how terrible that day was unless they walked in our steps."

Brosey agreed Kravetz was suffering from some sort of mental illness.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Kravetz, you're also very dangerous. There's no doubt in my mind if you were in court today, if you weren't in handcuffs ... you would easily act out again," Brosey continued. "I think you're constantly devising a way you could possibly escape, possibly assault somebody again."

With the sentence he handed down, Brosey said he hoped to ensure that “if you do see the light of day, it’s when you’re so old and feeble you can’t possibly do something like this again.”

Kravetz, 35, will be at least 59 when he’s released from prison as currently sentenced. He filed an appeal after the sentence was issued Friday.

“Judge Brosey just nailed it,” Davin said. “He said everything I wanted to say.”

“I think the judge was entirely appropriate in his review,” Menefee said. “I think he was reflecting the same concerns we have” in the sentence.

Arcuri declined to comment on the sentence, but said, “This entire episode is a very sad event. It will affect the lives of everyone involved for a very long time. ... This case is going to have lingering effects, not many of them positive.”

To see full video of the judge’s decision, view the video here: <http://youtu.be/4JuegNQwtPI>