

## Kravetz not guilty of attempted murder



Brionna Friedrich | The Daily World

Steven Kravetz is handcuffed to return to the Lewis County Jail after given his verdict Wednesday. He's likely to stay there until his sentencing next month.

**CHEHALIS** — After six days of arguments and 11 hours of deliberation, a Lewis County jury declared Steven Kravetz not guilty of attempted murder when he shot Deputy Polly Davin at the courthouse in Montesano last year.

They did find him guilty of first degree assault against Davin, disarming a law enforcement officer and second-degree assault against Judge David Edwards, who was stabbed in the neck when he came to Davin's aid.

"I would say the jury rendered a fair verdict," said Kravetz's attorney, David Arcuri.

"Obviously, we're somewhat disappointed they didn't find the defendant guilty of attempted murder," Prosecutor Stew Menefee said, adding that the fact that the jury did

find Kravetz guilty of first-degree assault showed they acknowledged the seriousness of the offense to some extent.

Kravetz's mother, Roberta Dougherty, said she was glad her son was at least acquitted of the attempted murder charge, but otherwise, "I'm kind of numb right now."

Deputy Prosecutor Gerald Fuller noted Judge Richard Brosey essentially has "carte blanche" on sentencing because the first-degree assault was committed against a law enforcement officer. Neither Arcuri nor Menefee gave a sentencing range Wednesday, but the maximum sentence for that offense is life in prison.

Enhancements on the charges for using a knife and gun will add six years to whatever sentence is given. It will be a day or so before prosecutors will calculate the exact sentencing range.

There was one false alarm on the verdict: Jurors came back ready to give a verdict, but after the verdict was stated, when the court asked each individually to confirm their verdict, Juror 12 said it wasn't his verdict. They were sent back to deliberate for about another hour.

When they returned, each confirmed the same verdict that had been read earlier, Juror 12 with a decidedly resigned expression.

Afterward, the juror, Dean Phillips, said he hadn't realized what would happen when he responded that way. He said he spent the whole deliberation to try to get the other jurors to see that Kravetz had been reacting, not consciously trying to hurt or kill anyone.

Phillips said he agreed to the verdict in order to "minimize damage" to Kravetz. If this jury couldn't come to an agreement, a new jury in a new trial might decide Kravetz was guilty on all counts.

"I see this as a big David vs. Goliath," Phillips said.

He said if Kravetz had gotten support after a 2005 incident in which he was taken to the hospital for a mental health evaluation, and when he subsequently felt he was raped by staff who took a urine sample with a catheter, this current case could have been avoided entirely.

“This poor guy has been picked on,” Phillips said. “I think they’re kind of responsible for pushing him into that corner” where he reacted violently.

Added to that, he said, “I don’t think (prosecutors) presented a good case.”

Phillips decried what he saw as a “double standard,” that Kravetz pointing a gun at Davin was assault or attempted murder, but she was free to point it at him.

He also questioned the reaction of court staff and Davin calling his behavior, which wasn’t harming anyone, “suspicious.”

“They really didn’t even have a good reason to go toward him,” Phillips said.

“I think we need to be helping people in this society,” he said. “I don’t think the justice system helps anybody. I know a lot of people fall through the cracks.”

If it were up to him, Phillips said, he would have found Kravetz not guilty on all counts.

“I wasn’t able to change enough minds,” he said.

Another juror came into the trial with much the same sympathy as Phillips, but reached a very different conclusion.

“It’s kind of like David and Goliath, this poor kid,” Garnet Lund said of her first reaction to Kravetz.

“By the time the trial was over, I completely changed my mind,” she said. Kravetz himself talked her out of it, in the six-hour recording of his interview with detectives played during the trial.

“I lost the sympathy because when it came to anything pertaining to him taking responsibility, he had an excuse,” Lund said. “I went home and I really had to admit my entire thought process had changed.”

While she wrestled with that transformation, she ultimately felt this verdict was more than fair.

“I think the criminal justice system treated him fairly and with respect. Probably better than he gave them,” she said.

Lund recalled Phillips' arguments in the jury room, particularly the belief that Edwards shouldn't have gotten into the fight between Davin and Kravetz to begin with. Lund called Edwards a hero.

"The judge to me is absolutely no different than the Sandy Hook teachers that stood up and tried to save the children," she said, referring to the elementary school shooting that killed six teachers and twenty children. "I think he deserves the credit."

Given her choice, Lund said she would have found Kravetz guilty of every charge, including attempted murder.

Dougherty said she had been working with a psychologist for two months prior to the attacks last year to try to convince her son to come to treatment. All three doctors who testified during the trial agreed he had some sort of illness, either a delusional disorder or paranoid schizophrenia, and Dougherty testified she first saw signs of it in Kravetz's late teens.

"I was hoping the mental illness would be a factor" with the jury, Dougherty said. "I'd like to see more people understand (mental illness). If they don't get help over the years, and they dwell on things, anything can happen."

While certainly not all those suffering from mental illnesses become violent, she added, going without treatment isn't good for anyone.

Everyone seemed to agree that it was a factor, but what kind and to what extent was less clear.

"They weighed it differently than I would, but that's their job," Menefee said.

Asked if she thought he could get treatment in prison, Dougherty said, "I don't know. I don't think that's the right environment for this."

No verdict the jury could give would send him to a mental hospital, which is what she said Kravetz really needs. She said he's threatened suicide at the notion of prison.

"Basically, I'd like to see him well and not ill."

Kravetz will stay in the Lewis County Jail until sentencing next month. An exact date has not been set.

That hearing may take place in the Grays Harbor County Courthouse in Montesano. Judge Brosey said that would make it easier for both the victims and courthouse staff who witnessed the shocking events to speak.

“There were a lot of people who went through a lot of visible trauma even if they weren’t injured,” he said.

After sentencing, Arcuri said Kravetz will file an appeal with a new attorney, which he said was appropriate and offer a new perspective on the case.