

Cedar Grove stalker acquitted of burglary

Written by Carol Pomeday
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Sheboygan County jury convicts 50-year-old man of trespassing, theft

A 63-year-old Cedar Grove woman who endured more than two years of stalking by her next-door neighbor said she was stunned when a Sheboygan County jury on Friday acquitted the man of felony burglary charges.

Thomas F. Schultz, 50, who pleaded no contest to felony stalking on Sept. 4, 2009, and is currently serving a 2-1/2-year prison sentence on that and related convictions, was charged with two counts of burglary with intent to cause mayhem after authorities uncovered what they believed to be a plot to rape and kill his victim.

During last week's trial, the jury listened to a taped interrogation of Schultz who told officers say he planned to rape and kill his neighbor in a nearby secluded area.

Although the jury acquitted Schultz of burglary, they convicted him of two counts of trespassing and misdemeanor theft for stealing the stethoscope.

A sentence hearing is set for 9 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 22, before Judge Timothy Van Akkeren. The misdemeanors could add 27 months to his prison time. The felony charges could have added 15 years.

The victim said she will ask the judge to keep the man who terrorized her behind bars as long as possible.

Schultz did not testify during the two-day trial, but his victim was on the stand.

Testifying with Schultz seated in front of her "was horrible," the woman said. "I just stared at my attorney and got through it that way. I never looked at the jury."

Her sister and mother sat through the two-day trial.

"I was glad I wasn't in there to hear the tape," the victim said. "I thought I might listen to it later, but my sister said, 'No, you shouldn't do that. You shouldn't have his voice in your mind.' I didn't know that he was going to take me to the ponds that are two blocks east and kill me there.

"He said he 'chickened out.' He didn't chicken out. The Lord was protecting me and changed his mind. It was nothing he did. The Lord was watching out for me and protecting me every night he didn't come in. I firmly believe that."

In his closing arguments, Sheboygan County Assistant District Attorney Nathan Haberman pointed to the contents of the bag found at Schultz's home, saying the items clearly show Schultz's intentions.

However, defense attorney Ryan Kautzer of Sheboygan said the plot was a fantasy of his

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client, spurred by the pornography and crime shows he frequently watched.

The woman said she is relieved she won't have to worry about what Schultz while he is in prison and hopes never to see him again.

"He can't come back to his house and he will be on the sexual offender list when he gets out. That's something I always wanted," the woman said.

Schultz's wife and son still live next door, but the house is for sale.