



Digital Security Systems

Jury takes one hour in assault conviction

Kane found guilty in attack on a fellow inmate.

By Jerry Bier

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Convicted killer Shaun Michael Kane wanted swift justice and got it Wednesday when a jury took about an hour to convict him of assault charges in connection with an attack on a fellow inmate in the federal prison at Atwater.

Kane, 26, already serving a 25-year federal sentence and facing a life sentence for a Nevada murder, frowned slightly as the verdicts were read.

He glanced at Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin P. Rooney and FBI Special Agent Mardee J. Robinson and smiled after the jury left the courtroom, then gave a "thumbs up" sign to the prosecutor.

Federal defendants are entitled to a trial within 70 days of their indictment, and while most waive time to allow for defense preparation, Kane, indicted May 6, insisted on a speedy trial.

He was convicted by the seven women and five men on the jury of assault with intent to commit murder and assault with a dangerous weapon.

He attacked inmate William Boles, 52, on June 27, 2003, with a makeshift knife while they and three other prisoners were in a recreation cage in the prison's secured housing units.

Jurors watched a digital video of the attack, which Rooney, pointing to Kane in his closing argument, said showed "this man stabbing, assaulting, trying to kill another man. You saw a man fighting for his life."

Photos taken of Boles after the attack showed wounds on his face and head.

Assistant Federal Defender Francine Zepeda told the jury that there was no evidence presented that showed the attack on Boles was an attempt to kill him. After the attack, Boles is seen moving around, away from the inmate identified as Kane.

And the alleged weapon, a makeshift knife molded from melted plastic wrap, was found two cages away and never tested for fingerprints or Boles' blood, Zepeda noted, adding there were "big holes in the government's case."

U.S. District Judge Anthony W. Ishii set Sept. 27 for sentencing, but it may be academic. Kane faces an estimated five to 10 years on the latest conviction, Rooney said, which would follow the time he already is serving in federal custody, plus the life sentence in Nevada.

Rooney said the new sentence probably would come into play only if Kane's murder conviction were overturned on appeal.

Kane killed a man with two shots to the head in a 1999 drug deal in Nevada, then was captured in Texas after a shootout with a U.S. Border Patrol agent. He was convicted both of the murder and of assaulting a federal officer.

Jurors were not told of Kane's prior convictions, nor were they aware of extra security measures inside the courtroom that included a stun belt around his waist and a large concrete-filled bucket anchored to his leg.

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