

## Woman gets 25 years for plunger attack

n Injured man's medical bills could reach \$1 million

Friday, May 23, 2008

A judge imposed the maximum penalty of 25 years in prison Thursday for a Tall Timbers woman convicted of first-degree assault on testimony that she attacked a man last year with a plunger, causing him severe injuries.

Robin Alana Thompson, 39, reiterated her insistence that she did not commit the crime alleged from the attack in January 2007 on Jason Lawrence Yeatts outside a mobile home in Clements.

Yeatts was beaten on the head with a hammer by a man living at the residence before Thompson forced Yeatts to the floor on the back porch, and shoved the handle of a plunger into his rectum, jurors were told at Thompson's trial.

"This is a disgusting thing that they say I did. I maintain my innocence," Thompson said Thursday as Yeatts sat with his family in the courtroom.

"He knows I didn't do this," Thompson said, but she acknowledged the recommendation in a presentence investigation. "My PSI says 25 years, and I accept my penalty."

Lyndell Yeatts, the injured man's mother, asked that the maximum sentence be imposed when she was called upon by St. Mary's Assistant State's Attorney Kevin McDevitt to speak to the judge.

"There are some truly horrible people in this world, and Robin Thompson, you are one of them," Lyndell Yeatts said.

McDevitt told the judge that Thompson derived "satisfaction and enjoyment" through committing the crime.

St. Mary's Circuit Judge C. Clarke Raley rejected public defender Sean Moran's claim that there was no evidence that Jason Yeatts suffered a permanent injury, and that the sentencing guidelines range should stop at 20 years.

"Don't forget this: They're only guidelines," Raley said of the sentencing process. "It's up to me, to the exclusion of all others in the world."

The judge said that Yeatts' ongoing medical procedures eventually could cost "between a half-million and a million dollars," and he noted references in the presentence investigation's report to Yeatts' continued endurance of a colostomy, rerouting his lower intestinal tract.

Before Thompson's trial last winter, prosecutors dismissed assault charges filed against 51-year-old Joseph Louis Herbert, the man who was accused of beating Yeatts with the hammer.

Yeatts, a 30-year-old Hollywood resident, testified that he left his cell phone with Herbert as collateral to twice get some crack cocaine after midnight at the residence, but that Herbert would not give Yeatts more of the drug when he returned a third time. Yeatts said he forced his way inside, reached over Herbert in a bed to grab some of the drug and some money, and was trying to escape when he was struck about 50 times with the hammer.

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On Thursday, Raley rejected the public defender's comments about the hammer attack's role in Yeatts' overall medical condition.

Remarking that it must have been an "awfully small hammer," Raley said, "If I hit somebody 50 times with a hammer, it's going to kill them."

Moran said Thompson's prior record included no crimes of violence, but the judge cited the report's list of her previous theft offenses, including from a past employer, amid 15 years of using crime to get money. Thompson told the judge that she previously sought drug rehabilitation.

A burglary charge filed against Yeatts after the incident was dismissed last year.

Thompson said in court Thursday that she will appeal the assault conviction.