



Drew Muskin, son of crash victim Herbert Muskin, holds a photograph of his parents as he attends the sentencing of Cassandra Alvarez and Lorraine Alvarado.

BY NOBLE BRIGHAM LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

World War II [veteran Herbert Muskin](#) was 101 but still drove, played blackjack almost every day and took care of his wife.

Then, in March 2023, a robbery suspect being pursued by police [crashed into the car he was driving](#). Muskin was at a red light near Sunset Road and Stephanie Street. He broke his neck, spent nearly a month in a hospital bed and [ultimately died](#).

A judge on Wednesday sentenced Kassandra Alvarez, the driver of the car that hit him, to 10 to 30 years in prison and ordered 14 to 40 years in prison for Lorraine Alvarado, who participated in the preceding robbery, pointed a gun at an officer and was previously accused of being an accomplice to Alvarez in the death of Muskin.

Police shot Alvarado. The women were each [indicted on a murder charge](#) but pleaded guilty to lesser charges in January.

Alvarez, 32, admitted to charges including robbery with a deadly weapon, reckless driving resulting in substantial bodily harm and stop required on signal of a police officer. Alvarado, 34, admitted to counts including robbery, resisting an officer and assault on a protected person with a deadly weapon.

The sentences District Judge Michelle Leavitt ordered were agreed upon by the defendants and prosecutors as part of plea negotiations.

“He did everything right,” said the victim’s son, Jon Muskin. “He served his country. He gave back to his community. He raised a family that respected the law. And the bitter irony is that none of that mattered on the night of March 1, 2023, because two people who were raised with none of those values decided that a bag of stolen merchandise was worth more than his life.”

Lawsuit: Police pursued defendants at over 100 mph

Supporters of the defendants pushed back after court, with Alvarez’s boyfriend Peter Price and Alvarado’s friend Cassandra Brooks saying the defendants had a good upbringing.

Muskin’s family has sued the Metropolitan Police Department and officers Justin Garcia and Jacob Barr. In the pending suit, their attorney has argued that the officers’ negligence led to Muskin’s death and his wife being injured.

The officers engaged in a vehicle pursuit of the defendants across the Las Vegas Valley at over 100 mph, according to the civil complaint.

Metro and the officers countersued the suspects, arguing that the injuries claimed by the Muskins were the suspects’ fault.

Defense attorneys and prosecutors also litigated the murder charges against Alvarez and Alvarado.

Herbert Muskin’s death certificate listed his cause of death as aspiration pneumonia as a consequence of complications of blunt force injuries. It also

listed global geriatric decline as a significant condition contributing to his death.

Karen Connolly, Alvarez's attorney, argued that Muskin should have been subject to an autopsy and took issue with the determined cause of death.

Prosecutors said the crash caused him to die and argued an autopsy was not necessary.

Leavitt refused to dismiss the murder charges.

Married for 67 years

Jon Muskin said his father was a U.S. Army captain during World War II and became an orthodontist after he came home from the war. He provided free care to some patients, including disabled children, but did not seek recognition, his son said.

He was also married for 67 years to Sherry Muskin, who died last year at 86. The couple moved to Las Vegas when he retired. Sherry Muskin was also injured in the crash, which occurred when the two were heading home from Costco, their son said.

"My father, even at 101 years old, was my mother's caretaker," Jon Muskin said. "He was the one who looked after her, drove her, kept their life together. When these defendants took him, they didn't just take her husband; they took the person she depended on to live."

He said after court that while his mother died from an injury unrelated to the crash, had his father been with her, he could have called an ambulance for her immediately.

Alvarez admitted to causing substantial bodily harm to Herbert Muskin "and/or" Sherry Muskin. The offenses Alvarado admitted to committing did not directly relate to the Muskins.

Drew Muskin described his father as a compassionate person.

"He was exceptionally likable and treated everyone who sat in his dental chair with kindness and respect," he said.

Though he is not sure of his father's exact service record, he said his father was stationed in Germany and trained to become a dentist while in the Army.

He said Alvarado and Alvarez posed a significant threat to society.

“I hope that they are not given another opportunity to inflict further harm onto others,” he told the judge.

‘I want to take accountability for my actions’

Before the sentencing hearing started, the defendants smiled as a Las Vegas Review-Journal photographer took their picture. Alvarado flashed a sign at the photographer, though it was unclear what she intended the gesture to mean, and she continued to smile during the hearing.

Connolly said her client may have been smiling at family and friends, but has a lot of remorse.

Ozzie Fumo, who represents Alvarado, declined to comment.

Alvarez offered her condolences to the Muskin family.

“I pray that you may have peace and forgiveness in your hearts and may you leave here with lighter spirits,” she said. “Today, I want to take accountability for my actions and, with this sentence, right my wrongs with dignity and respect.”

She added that she did not intend to harm anybody.

Alvarado also indicated that the crash was unintentional.

“I did not murder no one, but I know that I hurt their family,” she said.

She also blamed police.

“I would like to say that it was the tactics and the brutal excessive force that the officers used that spiraled the situation out of control,” Alvarado said. “A lot of things could have been prevented that night if the high-speed chase would have been called off.”

Jon Muskin said he thinks his father would still be alive were it not for the crash.

“He survived a century of living and he did not survive a trip to Costco,” he said. “That is what I have to carry. That is what my brother has to carry. That is what my daughters will carry for the rest of their lives.”

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