

Victim wants to help others

Ex-Miss Nebraska holds no grudges

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Reporter
and Matthew Woody
Senior Editor

Natalie Kuijvenhoven does not hold a personal vendetta against Christian Peter.

"I never had a personal motive to hurt Christian," Kuijvenhoven told the Daily Nebraskan. "I support him wholeheartedly in his attempts to beat his drinking problem and fulfill the steps of his probation."

In a telephone interview from KMVT-TV in Twin Falls, Idaho, where she is a news anchorwoman, Kuijvenhoven responded to questions about her motives in doing an ESPN interview about being sexually assaulted by Peter.

Kuijvenhoven, who graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in August, said she was contacted twice by ESPN for the interview that aired Dec. 22.

The first time, she said a producer at ESPN called her and told her the network wanted to do a story about Peter and sexual assaults.

Kuijvenhoven declined. A few days later, Kuijvenhoven said a different producer called and said ESPN wanted to change the focus of its report.

Kuijvenhoven said the network told her it was doing a story on sexual

assaults by athletes on college campuses across the country.

With the new angle, Kuijvenhoven agreed.

"That's where my concerns were — with sexual assault as a social issue," she said.

Kuijvenhoven said she thought the portion of her interview that aired would be used just as background, not the main part of her story.

"I was extremely nervous between the time of the interview and when it came out," she said. "I would really rather they not have used that, but I think it was fair."

Regardless, Kuijvenhoven said she was glad she did the interview because many women are afraid to come forward about a sexual assault.

"A lot of women feel like they have been victimized enough," Kuijvenhoven said. "Plain and simple, my motive was to address the issue of sexual assault and give other women courage."

The former Miss Nebraska said she was pleased with the way her complaint was handled and that she bears no ill will toward Peter.

"I think that he did receive a fair punishment for the third-degree sexual assault against me," she said. "It's not fair for me to say he's a bad person. I don't think that."

Kuijvenhoven said she was part of a support group in Twin Falls that worked to help victims of sexual assault.

Although she is trying to help other women in similar situations,

Kuijvenhoven said she wanted her incident with Peter to be put to rest.

But unfortunately for her, members of the national media won't let it die.

Kuijvenhoven said she had received so many calls from every form of media that her producer at KMVT was turning down every call on the spot without even asking her.

One national newspaper, the New York Daily News, ran a sports column by Filip Bondy on Jan. 8 about Peter that contained sexual assault allegations.

One of Peter's attorneys, Gary Fox of Monmouth County, N.J., on Thursday called those allegations lies and said that he was planning to file suit against the newspaper.

The story also contained comments by Kuijvenhoven and another of Peter's attorneys, Hal Anderson of Lincoln, about Kuijvenhoven's case.

Kuijvenhoven said that the only reason she agreed to speak to the Daily News writer was because he told her he would write the article anyway, since her case was a matter of public record.

"I wanted to make sure his story was accurate," she said.

Anderson was quoted in the article as saying Peter's offense was "nothing very egregious." Kuijvenhoven said that spoke poorly of the attorney.

"Maybe Hal Anderson doesn't (think it was serious)," Kuijvenhoven said. "Maybe Christian doesn't. But I certainly didn't take it lightly that night."

Peter's punishment fair, Osborne says

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Reporter

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said Thursday that his punishment of Christian Peter for a third-degree sexual assault conviction was substantial and fair.

Along with an 18-month court-ordered probation, Peter, a junior human development major, was suspended for 10 days during spring practice and couldn't play in the spring game.

Osborne said the punishment fit into the normal system set by the team's Unity Council.

The Unity Council is made up of two players from each position on the football team. One of its primary roles is to prevent and punish any wrongdoing by team members.

Osborne told the Daily Nebraskan that the disciplinary action was based on a point system.

A player starts with five points. If he is convicted of a felony, he loses five points. Conviction of a misdemeanor, or a drug offense such as driving while intoxicated or minor in possession, costs a player four points. A player loses three points for missing practice, two for missing a team meeting and one for missing class or a tutoring session.

If a player loses all five points, he is suspended. Osborne said if a player lost the five points on two separate occasions, the chances were good that he would be kicked off the team.

He also said the recent national media treatment of Peter wasn't fair.

"I am concerned with what they have done to Christian," Osborne said. "It has caused him a lot of distress, and it has caused his family a lot of distress. I think it is basically unfair."

But Osborne said the media always targeted a successful football program. And with Nebraska's Orange Bowl win, Osborne said his program had come under more scrutiny.

"I felt even before we played the game, that if we won, we would pay a certain price," he said.

Osborne said he wanted to put Peter's past behind the player and the team.

"I am more concerned with where a guy is going than where a guy is coming from," Osborne said. "He has been a good team leader, and his grades have improved. I don't know what else I can go on besides that."

Peter

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bar, but was convinced from what others told him that he did have contact with her.

Peter's letter also says that because of concerns he had about himself, he completed an alcohol treatment and counseling program and he felt much better about himself than he did in the past.

Coach Tom Osborne said he had heard rumors that Peter's behavior changed while under the influence of alcohol.

"Christian can be somewhat impulsive, and alcohol just brought it to a head," Osborne said Thursday. "Alcohol and Christian didn't mix."

But an interview with Kuijvenhoven was aired Dec. 22 on ESPN, focusing on sexual assaults by athletes on college campuses across the country.

Attorney Hal Anderson of Lincoln said that at the time Kuijvenhoven filed charges, she told the police she did not want the matter to become public.

"Since then she has made it quite public, which is quite astonishing to me," Anderson said.

Kuijvenhoven told the Daily Nebraskan on Thursday that it was not her intention to make this matter public.

"I never told them that — my name was never to be made public because of protection of a person's name in a sexual assault case," she said. "I was

protected until I decided to appear on ESPN."

Peter said he was also surprised by Kuijvenhoven's change of attitude.

"For someone who was hurt so deeply as she was, she has come out basically everywhere," he said. "I didn't want that to happen."

More recently, Kuijvenhoven told her story to Filip Bondy of the New York Daily News. Bondy's Jan. 8 column also said Peter may have been involved in other incidences.

Peter and his attorneys said the other allegations in the column were lies.

Gary Fox of Monmouth County, N.J., the Peter family's attorney, said he planned on filing suit against the New York Daily News.

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