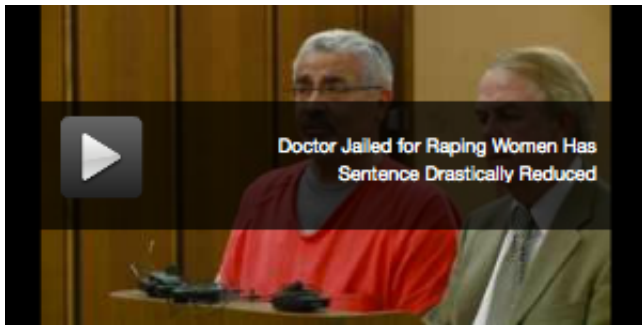




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# Doctor Convicted of Raping Patients Gets Prison Sentence Drastically Reduced

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CLEVELAND – A former gynecologist originally sentenced to 45 years in prison eight years ago for sexually assaulting dozens of his patients, received a drastically reduced sentence from the same judge Tuesday.

“I have been so much suffered. I’m a broken man now, your honor... I ask your mercy. I ask the mercy of your community, I ask the mercy of the victims and everybody. I feel guilty from the bottom of my heart here,” the former doctor, Azzam Ahmed, 65, pleaded to the judge during the hearing.

Ahmed was re-sentenced today by Judge Shirley Strickland Saffold for the crimes in which he was convicted in 2004. Saffold ordered Ahmed jailed for 11 years, a fraction of his previous sentence.

“I feel guilty from the bottom of my heart for the whole thing. Seriously, I am [a] reformed man and I put myself on the mercy of the court,” Ahmed said.

Ahmed won the right to a re-sentencing after an appeals court ruled that there was ‘inadequate basis’ for the 45-year sentence.

“I want to bring it back to what this case is about, it’s about the victims. We’re talking about a man here who has been molesting his patients for three decades,” said Asst. County Prosecutor James Gutierrez after the hearing.

A jury convicted Ahmed in 2004 on 20 of the 53 charges he faced, including two counts of rape.

Thirty-four female patients came forward with testimony during his trial that they were sexually assaulted by Ahmed. The sexual assaults and rapes spanned a 25-year period.

“I’m shocked, I’m appalled and I’m disgusted,” one of Ahmed’s victims, known during the court case as ‘Jane Doe #33,’ told Fox 8 News.

We are not revealing her identity because she is a sexual assault victim.

“I don’t get it, and I really would like to understand where the judge is coming from. I don’t believe he’s sorry,” she said, adding she is afraid of him and fears for her life.

In May of 2006 Ahmed’s legal team appealed to Saffold for a shorter sentence. The appeal was denied and the 45-year sentence was upheld.

Saffold’s ruling means that with time already served, Ahmed will be released from prison in less than three years.

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