

El Dorado County couple – martyrs or drug dealers?

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Dr. Marion P. “Mollie” Fry packs for federal prison in her red “Marijuana Medic” T-shirt.

She is an activist who wears her cause, who clutches a medical cross with a cannabis leaf, who points animatedly at her chest hollowed by radical breast cancer surgery. Her emotional account has stirred rallies demanding acceptance for the “medicine” that alleviated her suffering.

Now, in a widely followed saga, Fry, 54, and her husband, Dale Schafer, 56, are to surrender Monday to serve five years in federal prison for conspiring to produce and distribute marijuana.

They are headed to prison after spurning a plea deal that would have spared Fry any time behind bars and given her husband 1 1/2 years. They are losing their freedom, said federal Judge Frank Damrell, due to their own “self-aggrandizement” as “missionaries for marijuana” that left them feeling impervious to the law.

To California medical marijuana advocates, Fry and Schafer are martyrs for the cause. They portray the El Dorado County couple, a physician who recommended pot and an attorney who counseled patients on marijuana law, as compassionate servants who believed in the healing properties of cannabis.

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