

United States Court of Appeals
For the Eighth Circuit

No. 25-1230

United States of America

Plaintiff - Appellee

v.

Candace Chapman Scott

Defendant - Appellant

Appeal from United States District Court
for the Eastern District of Arkansas - Central

Submitted: April 16, 2026

Filed: September 1, 2026

Before LOKEN, SHEPHERD, and STRAS, Circuit Judges.

STRAS, Circuit Judge.

Some crimes defy comparison, like Candace Scott's decision to sell human body parts on Facebook. She believes the 180-month sentence she received is too high, but we affirm.

Scott had access to cadavers as an apprentice mortician. Using Facebook Messenger, she contacted a body-parts collector to ask if he knew anyone who was

“in the market” for a human brain. She found the right person because he bought it, another brain, and a heart for \$1,200. He also came back for 24 more boxes of body parts over the following months. At one point, to cover her tracks, she gave a family an urn filled with fake ashes rather than the remains of their dead baby.

Once the FBI caught on to her scheme, agents raided her home. During the search, they uncovered body parts stuffed in trash bags and boxes, including a brain and a heart. She pleaded guilty to interstate transportation of stolen property, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 2314, and conspiring to commit mail fraud, *see id.* §§ 1341, 1349. The advisory range was 10 to 16 months in prison, but the district court¹ varied upward to 180 months. She argues that the more than tenfold increase from the top of the range was substantively unreasonable.

We conclude otherwise. *See United States v. Feemster*, 572 F.3d 455, 461 (8th Cir. 2009) (en banc) (recognizing that we review sentences, even those “outside the Guidelines range,” under “a deferential abuse-of-discretion standard” (citation omitted)). The record shows that the district court sufficiently considered the statutory sentencing factors, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), and did not rely on an improper factor or commit a clear error of judgment, *see United States v. Larison*, 432 F.3d 921, 923–24 (8th Cir. 2006).

In doing so, it emphasized the “nature and circumstances” of Scott’s offenses, 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a)(1), which were substantially more serious than the garden-variety “financial crime[s]” these statutes usually cover. After all, she “[l]oot[ed]” cadavers by “chopping off body parts and mailing them” to others for money. *See United States v. Isler*, 983 F.3d 335, 340, 345 (8th Cir. 2020) (upholding a sevenfold upward variance because the district court “conclu[ded] that the Guidelines range underrepresented the seriousness of the offense”). The district court thought that, other than perhaps “murder and maybe rape of children,” Scott’s crimes were about

¹The Honorable Brian S. Miller, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

as “bad as you get.”² *See United States v. Richart*, 662 F.3d 1037, 1053–54 (8th Cir. 2011) (affirming a 20-fold upward variance based on the “brutal” nature of the defendant’s conduct).

It also discussed the need to deter copycats. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a)(2)(B) (discussing how a sentence should provide “adequate deterrence to criminal conduct”). Even though Scott was unlikely to reoffend, the point was to stop anyone else “dealing with mortuaries” from trying to make extra money in the same way. *See United States v. Foy*, 617 F.3d 1029, 1033, 1037 (8th Cir. 2010) (explaining that a 218-month upward variance could provide “general deterrence to similarly situated persons”). Called “general deterrence,” it is “an appropriate consideration” at sentencing. *Ferguson v. United States*, 623 F.3d 627, 632 (8th Cir. 2010).

It makes no difference that another supplier received only 15 months. The district court tailored the sentence to fit what Scott did, which included stealing the body parts herself. *Cf. United States v. Dickson*, 127 F.4th 722, 730 (8th Cir. 2025) (noting that “relief based on a comparison to co-conspirators is . . . unusual” (citation omitted)); *United States v. Granados*, 962 F.2d 767, 774 (8th Cir. 1992) (explaining that “disparit[ies] will always exist” because “sentences are based upon the specific facts of each individual defendant’s case”).

We accordingly affirm the judgment of the district court and deny Scott’s motion to supplement the briefing.

²The court was not saying that the crimes she committed were just as serious as “murder or rape.” Rather, the idea was that she had shown a similar disrespect for human dignity, including by lying to a family about the ashes they received. Indeed, the court acknowledged that “[s]he didn’t kill [anyone].” *See United States v. Stone*, 873 F.3d 648, 649 (8th Cir. 2017) (per curiam) (rejecting the defendant’s characterization of the district court’s statements because he took them “out of context”).