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# Burlington jury finds accused rapist not guilty - News - Burlington County Times

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Update: The jury has rendered a not guilty verdict for accused rapist Marcelo G. Mota.

A Superior Court jury will begin deliberations Wednesday in the trial of Marcelo G. Mota, a Delran man accused of a series of sexual assaults against women in Moorestown in 2005.

Over the two-week trial at the Burlington County Courthouse in Mount Holly, jurors heard testimony from a woman whom Mota, now 35, allegedly attacked in her home on Hogan Way in the Laurel Creek development on Sept. 24, 2005.

They also heard from law enforcement officials, forensic scientists, neighbors, the nurse who examined the woman after the alleged attack, and the woman's son and her three friends, who were in the home. Mota sat beside his defense attorney, Robin Lord, of Trenton, throughout the trial.

The alleged Hogan Way victim, then 35, awoke at 4:20 a.m. to find a man's hand over her mouth, according to testimony. He then held a sharp object to her shoulder, sexually assaulted her and threatened to have his accomplice kill her son and his friends,

according to testimony.

On Tuesday, Lord reminded the jury that guilt must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. She called the woman's testimony a complete and total fish story.

A bunch of strange facts are just being thrown at us, one after the other, that just don't make sense, she said in her closing statement.

The lawyer outlined 23 points of doubt, including that the woman was unable to identify Mota as her assailant.

But the woman's inability to positively identify Mota shouldn't count against her, Burlington County Assistant Prosecutor Michael Luciano argued in his closing statement. Noting that it was dark during the alleged attack, he said, I'm amazed at the details she could remember.

Luciano said the alleged victim endured the most personal violations a woman can suffer.

Authorities have described Mota as a serial rapist who entered victims homes late at night or during the early morning hours and attacked them in their bedrooms.

Two days after the Hogan Way incident, a second Laurel Creek break-in was reported on Palmer Drive. In that case, a man entered a second-floor bedroom but fled when a woman screamed.

Mota also was charged with two sexual assaults and an attempted sexual assault against women in Massachusetts in 2003. He was linked to the Moorestown attacks after DNA evidence collected at the Laurel Creek homes matched DNA evidence found in the Massachusetts cases.

Authorities arrested Mota on July 14, 2007, as he left a restaurant

in Cherry Hill. He was charged with aggravated sexual assault and burglary in the Moorestown cases and with being a fugitive from justice in Massachusetts. He was jailed on \$1 million bail and faces 20 years in prison if convicted.

Prosecutors said Mota, a Brazilian immigrant, had been living illegally in the United States since his visa expired in 2001. He worked as a Portuguese translator for a Delran tax preparation service and lived in the Tenby Chase section of the township.

Court records show that a restraining order was issued against Mota after a domestic violence incident involving his wife, who later moved to California. He filed for divorce in April 2007, citing irreconcilable differences, according to court documents.

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