



## **Beaufort woman who allegedly lied about rape signed plea deal, but trial still possible, says prosecutor**

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**APRIL 22, 2011 08:07 PM, UPDATED APRIL 23, 2011 09:50 AM**

Federal charges are still pending against a Beaufort woman accused of lying to investigators about being raped inside her Laurel Bay home last year, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Court records indicate Tracy Lynn Valderrama agreed to plead guilty to one count of making false statements in February, but Nathan Williams, who is prosecuting the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office, said the plea has not been entered in court and the case could still go to trial.

Williams declined to say what Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigators have uncovered about the case, citing the pending charges.

"I would expect that is something that could come out at a trial," Williams said.

Valderrama was indicted by a federal grand jury in June 2010 on three counts of knowingly making false statements to federal investigators during interviews about the alleged attack, federal court records show. Each charge carries a \$250,000 fine and up to five years in prison.

"There's a plea agreement filed but the case is still pending, and we could go to trial for all I know," Williams said. "Right now, there is nothing scheduled. I would expect some kind of resolution, one way or another, within the next few months."

Valderrama claimed the attack occurred Feb. 2, 2010, and her allegation sparked an NCIS investigation that resulted in the arrest of a Marine lance corporal, the tripling of patrols inside Laurel Bay, and the collection of DNA samples from maintenance workers, police officers and anyone else who might have been near the house when the attack was said to have occurred.

Three months later, she admitted to fabricating the assault, according to NCIS investigators and officials at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort.

The Marine, whose name was never released, was arrested three days after the woman reported the attack. NCIS charged him with rape, breaking and entering, and larceny. He was jailed for more than a month at the U.S. Naval Consolidated Brig in Charleston, then released after the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory found that DNA evidence taken from the crime scene did not match.

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