

## Not-guilty verdict in rape, kidnapping case

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Dan Thrift / Tahoe Daily Tribune / Eduardo Galecia-Hernandez, accused of kidnapping and raping a woman, was found not guilty of the crimes by a jury on Friday.

Eduardo Galecia-Hernandez kept a stoic look as an interpreter translated the not-guilty verdicts delivered by a jury after more than two days of deliberation.

Galecia-Hernandez was set to be released Friday from El Dorado County Jail, where he's been since his June 10 arrest.

The 27-year-old alleged cocaine dealer faced life in prison on charges alleging he kidnapped a woman at knifepoint and forced her to drive to the Beverly Lodge where he gagged and raped her and kept the woman against her will.

The woman, identified as Jane Doe to protect her identity, testified she received free cocaine from Galecia-Hernandez and would be in daily contact with him.

El Dorado County District Attorney Lisa Serafini displayed photographs of the woman, whose body was riddled with bruises, cuts and cigarette burns. The injuries are said to be from Jamie Lynn Olson, wife of Galecia-Hernandez, who was also in the hotel room. Olson's trial is expected to begin in Placerville this week.

Some of the focus throughout the three-week trial centered on time. Doe testified early in the trial she was kidnapped while she was beginning her walk to work at Heavenly Village. Her shift began at 5 p.m. but she was running late.

She was also up for three days straight and smoked cocaine while driving to work, Doe testified.

But defense witness Dan Jensen from Sprint said cell phone records indicated Galecia-Hernandez, or at least his phone, was used on June 9 to Folsom and back up to South Lake Tahoe, returning in the evening.

Galecia-Hernandez said he and his wife took a drive to the Sacramento on the day Doe said she was kidnapped.

In her closing testimony, Serafini told jury members to disregard time while defense attorney Lori London said it was a critical factor.

Jury member Brenda Johnson said the panel agreed with London.

“Time was a big deal,” Johnson said. “I know (the prosecution) didn’t want it to be but it was.”

A lack of DNA evidence supporting Doe’s statements had little influence on the jury, Johnson said, but “inconsistencies” in Doe’s testimony was important.

“We had some kind of feeling something went on but we didn’t have enough to say he did it,” Johnson said.

Serafini declined to comment, saying her words could impact the jury in Olson’s upcoming trial. Paul Palant, who is representing Olson, thought “it was a very appropriate verdict.”

London said she was sometimes on edge while the jury of eight men and four women deliberated Wednesday, Thursday and into Friday. Johnson estimated the jury deliberated for about 20 hours.

“I think there was insufficient evidence,” London said.

“I honestly think something happened to this woman,” London continued. “I don’t know what happened to this woman but the evidence just wasn’t there to convict him.”

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