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Santa Clarita / Antelope Valley : Mistrial Is Declared in Rape Case : Court: For the second time, a jury deadlocks over charges that a psychologist assaulted a Lancaster woman in his home.

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VAN NUYS —

A judge dismissed sexual assault charges against an Antelope Valley psychologist Wednesday when a jury in his second trial deadlocked in favor of acquittal.

A Lancaster woman had accused Charles Catanese of raping her Jan. 2, 1992, at his remote residence near Gorman. The mistrial was declared when a Van Nuys Superior Court jury split 10 to 2 in favor of a not guilty verdict.

Judge Howard J. Schwab, who presided over both trials, dismissed the case after the jury announced it was deadlocked.

“It was great for him,” defense attorney Russell Iungerich said.

In Catanese’s first trial, another jury split 6 to 6 on the charges of rape, sexual battery and attempted oral copulation.

Catanese’s accuser was a 38-year-old employee of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, who was referred to Catanese so he could evaluate a stress disability claim that she filed after she was allegedly sexually harassed by male co-workers.

She testified that Catanese lured her to his isolated home with promises of treatment involving holistic medicine and Scripture readings.

Catanese denied that he was treating the woman, but admitted to striking up a friendship with her.

Iungerich said several members of the jury expressed sympathy for the psychologist and wondered why the case was brought to trial. Deputy Dist. Atty. Robert Foltz, who tried the case, was not available for comment Wednesday.

The woman, who still maintains that she was raped, has filed a lawsuit against Catanese, seeking \$500,000 in compensatory damages and an unspecified punitive award.

Iungerich said Wednesday that Catanese will soon file a multimillion-dollar countersuit, contending that the woman pursued a malicious prosecution. "We're going to look for emotional distress damages," he said.

Hoping to show that the woman was not victimized, Catanese presented evidence that he spoke with the woman on the phone for more than 1,300 minutes in the two months after the alleged attack.

The woman's charges did prompt an administrative law judge to suspend Catanese's license to practice psychology. A trial is scheduled in March to determine if the suspension will be permanent.

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-11-18-me-58315-story.html>