

Lawyer acquitted of sexual assault

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May 06, 2010 8:37 PM

By SANFORD J. SCHMIDT

The Telegraph
EDWARDSVILLE - Chicago lawyer Meanith Huon cried tears of relief Thursday after a jury acquitted him of two counts of criminal sexual assault of a former Carlinville woman.

"I just want to thank my lawyers. I want to thank God," Huon, 40, told reporters after the verdict.

The case went to the jury in Madison County Circuit Court about 2 p.m. Thursday, and the verdict came back shortly after 4 p.m.

The defense presented little evidence but spent much of the court time cross-examining witnesses, including the alleged victim, in an effort to cast doubt on her story.

The alleged victim, 28, returned to the Madison County Courthouse after the verdict came in. She appeared angry but declined to comment.

She claimed she met Huon in St. Louis as part of a job interview for a promotional job, and he forced her into two different sex acts while they were driving north on Interstate 55.

The woman testified she would place ads on the Craig's List website and was contacted by Huon for a promotional job interview. However, they ended up drinking for several hours in downtown St. Louis bars before she got into his car, apparently to go meet co-workers.

Defense lawyers Michael J. Mettes and N. Scott Rosenblum claimed the woman lied repeatedly. They said the meeting turned into a social occasion, and the alleged victim attempted to extort money from the defendant.

They claimed she became angry when he would not pay and made up a "rape" story to get back at Huon. They did not call Huon to the stand to corroborate that theory.

In cross-examining the woman and police, the defense attorneys emphasized certain things she said on the witness stand that did not appear in police reports or were at odds with previous statements.

The woman cried repeatedly during her testimony, but the inconsistencies brought out in cross-examination apparently were enough to raise doubts in the minds of the jurors.

Madison County State's Attorney William Mudge said he thought the state put on a good case.

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...were disappointed. This happens from time to time," Mudge said. "We thought the main goal was credible, but obviously, the jury had doubts."

Mudge and Rosenblum both praised Assistant State's Attorneys Chris Hoell and Amy Chapman for their efforts.

Rosenblum said Huon is anxious to get back to work as a personal injury lawyer.

"Obviously, we're very relieved. This has been a very difficult ordeal for Meanith for the past two years. Certainly, he is anxious to get back to his life as he knew it," Rosenblum said.

However, Huon still faces charges of harassment of a witness and cyber stalking.

He allegedly contacted the victim in 2008 via the Internet and communicated indirectly with her in such a way as to cause her emotional distress.

Huon also was accused of maintaining a website to harass the victim and her immediate family.

He was charged with those offenses in 2009 while he was free on \$10,000 cash bond on the original charges. He also posted \$7,500 cash bond on the 2009 charges and has been free on bond since then.

On the website, Huon professed love for the victim and suggested they get married, according to a transcript on filed in-court documents.

Mudge said his office has not decided on how to proceed on those charges. He said he would confer with the assistant state's attorneys on the matter.

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This could have happened either way, like the sports and movie stars who get falsely accused for money payoff, but why would an attorney go to Craigs List in St. Louis to promote a professional job search from Chicago? And then come to St. Louis to conduct such an interview? I have never had alcoholic drinks or social hour during an job interview! It's also a wonder that the attorney knows or should know someone in the Chicago area that could do the job for which he seeks, there in Chicago. Strange! To go meet co-workers, is she hired, then does this mean she entitled to workerman comp claim.

I don't know.

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