

Inmate takes stand in guard rape case

A 57-year-old prison inmate wept in state Supreme Court on Monday while recounting the story of how an older correction officer grabbed her by the arm, threw her against a bathroom wall and raped her.

Frederick Brenyah, 62, of Yonkers has pleaded not guilty to rape and other charges, which stem from an encounter in September 2010 at the Taconic Correctional Facility where the woman — who is serving 20 years to life for arson and murder — said that Brenyah pulled her into an officers' bathroom and attacked her.

"He got his stuff out and was putting it behind my back," the woman said Monday during Brenyah's trial in state Supreme Court in White Plains. She said that it wasn't long after he exposed himself that Brenyah briefly penetrated her as she was forced up against a heating radiator.

"I started crying," the woman said. "I said, 'Don't do this to me. Don't do this to me.'"

Seconds later, the woman said, Brenyah turned her around and tried to force her to perform oral sex.

Brenyah, who is married, has denied the charges, and he declined to comment on the case after the trial broke for the day.

Angelo McDonald, a lawyer for Brenyah, said that his client was innocent of the rape and that the woman's accusations were motivated more by money and a desire to "cull sympathy" with parole boards. The woman has also filed a civil lawsuit in the case.

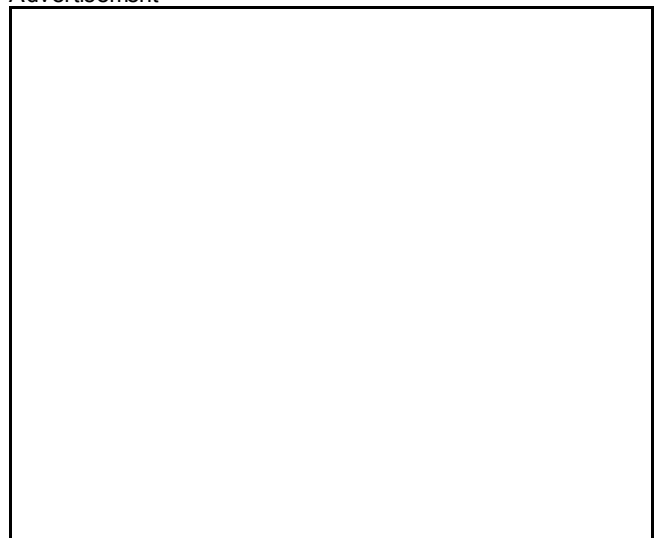
"For all intents and purposes (Brenyah) is an easygoing, frail man," McDonald said. The lawyer also said that prosecutors have not produced much physical evidence. "There was no criminal sexual act. There was no sodomy," he said.

Under questioning from McDonald, the woman admitted to a long rap sheet, including a number of convictions in the 1970s and 1980s on drug charges.

She also admitted to setting fire to a Washington Heights apartment Feb. 14, 1989, and killing two people, at least one of whom she had thought stole drugs from her.

But that rap sheet doesn't account for a

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previous accusation of rape against Brenyah — who has been suspended without pay since the latest incident.

He was acquitted in 2003 of propping a woman on a bathroom sink and raping her.

Linda Foglia, a state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision spokeswoman, said Monday that the DOCCS had tried to fire Brenyah then, but failed when a labor arbitrator returned him to duty in 2004.

“The alleged actions of Brenyah are not, in any way, illustrative of our statewide workforce and he must now face the inevitable consequences of his actions,” Foglia said.

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