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7-Year Term for Marital Sex Assault; Activists Pleased with Conviction, Sentence in Pr. George's Case

By Ruben Castaneda, Washington Post Staff Writer

A Bowie man was sentenced to seven years in prison Friday after what Prince George's prosecutors believe is the first trial conviction for marital sexual assault in the county.

Valentine Selwyn Boston, 41, was convicted April 15 of second-degree attempted rape, second-degree assault, false imprisonment and violating a protective order.

Anti-domestic violence activists said they were pleased with the conviction and the sentence by Circuit Court Judge Sean D. Wallace.

"I think it's very significant. Even though we've had a marital rape statute in Maryland for a long time, it's hard to prosecute these cases. There aren't many of them," said Michaele Cohen, executive director of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence.

Lynn Rosenthal, executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, said police and prosecutors in recent years have become more responsive to allegations of sexual assault within a marriage.

Prince George's State's Attorney Glenn F. Ivey said: "I think Judge Wallace sent a very strong and clear message with this sentence. I hope that this will be a deterrent for this kind of spousal abuse in the future."

Boston's wife was attacked Nov. 4, according to court testimony. The Washington Post does not identify victims of sexual assault.

Assistant State's Attorney Ann Wagner-Stewart, head of the state's attorney's Domestic Violence Unit, said the victim testified that she and Boston were going through marital difficulties. She had obtained a protective order that allowed him to stay in the same house, so long as he was not violent.

The victim testified that she and Boston slept in separate bedrooms, Wagner-Stewart said. The night of the attack, the victim told jurors, she went to the kitchen to fix a bottle for their 10-month-old daughter.

When she returned to her bedroom, Boston jumped up from beside her bed, holding what she believed to be a knife, according to Wagner-Stewart. The woman testified that she kicked the object out of Boston's hand but that he attempted to rape her. Boston bit the inside of her knee and choked her, the victim testified.

Boston let her up, then followed her into the bathroom and said he wanted sex, the victim testified. The woman told jurors that she submitted because she feared he would become more violent, Wagner-Stewart said. The prosecutor said that was why Boston was not charged with rape.

The victim reported the attack to county police that morning, Wagner-Stewart said.

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