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Soldier Found Guilty of Sexual Assault

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EDMONTON – A soldier has been convicted of sexually assaulting a young female recruit during a party after basic training three years ago.

Master Cpl. Orman Savage, 36, sat ramrod straight and looked directly ahead as the judge issued his decision on Thursday afternoon.

Provincial court Judge Albert Chrumka called Savage's testimony at trial "ludicrous" and "concocted."

"You seem to be your own worst witness," Chrumka said, adding the testimony was "so fanciful it is unbelievable."

Chrumka said he believed the testimony of the young woman, who was 21 years old when she was raped. She cannot be named due to a publication ban.

In the early morning hours of July 31, 2004, she was celebrating with other young recruits at Debney Armoury after completing her first month of basic training.

She had been drinking heavily and was feeling ill, and so she went to the bathroom with a friend. She said Savage approached the two women on their way to the bathroom, and offered to take care of her while the friend returned to the party. She agreed.

When they got into the bathroom, she said he locked the door and took her to the largest stall, which was farthest from the door. There he assaulted her.

After the attack, military supervisors told her to seek medical attention before calling police. However, the nurses on the base did not do rape kits, and she was forced to wait several hours before being assessed by a doctor.

Outside court on Thursday, the young woman's mother criticized the military for its handling of the case.

"It is always hush hush," the woman's mother said. "That instructor raped my daughter on a military base on military time ... and it was always hush hush."

The mother and daughter called on the military to change the way they handle rape cases.

As a result of the attack, the young woman has abandoned her dream of serving in the military.

She suffers from post traumatic stress disorder and cannot be around men in combat fatigues. She has dropped out of school and attempted suicide.

She said Thursday that she is glad the judge saw through Savage's lies.

"It's a sense of relief," she said. "I'm just happy now that I can get on with my life."

Savage will be sentenced Oct. 24.

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