

Alleged rape victim wants \$2.5M

By Darlene McCormick

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WATERBURY — A woman alleging her rape claim wasn't handled properly and that police treated her like the criminal asked a jury for \$2.5 million in damages Thursday.

Attorney Maureen Norris told the jury during closing arguments the woman will never be the same after her treatment by Waterbury Police Capt. Douglas Moran, who questioned her story after noting oddities in the case.

"He sat there like a man picking

Closing arguments given in Waterbury

the wings off a grasshopper," Norris said.

That interview with Moran was more devastating than the rape itself, Norris said. The 44-year-old businesswoman testified she was crushed when officers who were supposed to help her, tried to blame her instead.

Moran told police in September of 1993 that she was raped by an un-

known assailant who crept into her Waterbury home. Her attacker tied her up with panty hose, blindfolded her, sexually assaulted her and terrorized her with a gun while her two young children slept in their rooms, she said.

The alleged attack took place while her husband was at a wedding in Colorado.

The woman claims police mishandled the investigation because they were more interested in blaming her

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RAPE: City attorney claims story dubious

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than finding the rapist.

As the woman and her husband clung to each other in front of the jury, Norris said the husband, who is also a plaintiff, may never regain the woman he married.

She pointed out that a psychologist testified the woman suffered from post traumatic stress syndrome because of the rape and her treatment by police. The psychologist said the woman would be scarred for life.

"Their lives have value. Please let your verdict reflect that," she asked.

But Cheryl Hricko, an attorney for the city, countered with evidence suggesting the woman's tale of rape simply wasn't true and her story was concocted to cover for an affair.

If the woman's tale is false, then there can be no damages, she told the jury.

Hricko cited months' worth of investigation by police that involved numerous interviews, blood samples from potential suspects, an examination of the crime scene and DNA evidence from the victim.

Strange circumstances surrounding the woman's claim prompted Moran to re-interview the woman, ask her if she wanted to change her story and read her her Miranda rights, Hricko said.

Hricko painted the scene that September

night as a violent, terrifying one where a burglar carrying a knife and gun pounced upon the woman in her own bed. He then threatened to kill her if she called police, according to the woman.

When the woman found her phone dead, she fled the house without her children, ages 5 and 7, who remained asleep. The woman didn't take a weapon when she ran down the street to her relative's home to call 911, Hricko pointed out.

"Two little children are left in the home after all that," Hricko said.

Hricko wondered if it would have made more sense for the woman to run next door, within sight of her home, and ask for help from a retired police captain.

During the 911 recording, the woman called her rapist the "gentleman that did this." The woman said, "I begged for my life, and he was kind."

Hricko questioned such language given the brutal attack. The attorney also pointed out the woman's story seemed to guarantee no description would ever be possible.

The man was masked and he put a pillow case over her head and tied her up with nylons from her dresser. The woman's only description of her attacker was that he was possibly a black man or someone with a Jamaican accent who smelled of mechanical oil.

The woman was otherwise uninjured — no

bruises, no cuts — except for what the woman claims is a scratched cornea.

Hricko pointed out the bed covers were neatly turned down and the contents of her purse were in a tidy pile on the bed. The burglar didn't take the diamonds the woman told him about and police found a pillowcase full of costume jewelry left at the bottom of the stairs.

The rapist neatly cut her panties off, instead of tearing them off, Hricko said. The man didn't penetrate her except with his finger, according to the woman. But a hospital exam found semen in her vagina. Pubic hairs found on her body belonged to a white man, not a black one, Hricko said.

Given all the evidence, it was reasonable for Moran to question the woman's account, Hricko said. Moran was also given information by an informant that the woman had made up the story because one of her children had woken up and walked in on her and her lover. The woman supposedly panicked and made up the story in case the child remembered anything.

But Norris countered that the theory of an affair didn't make any sense. The woman was not on the birth control pill. Instead, she used a diaphragm and spermicidal jelly. There was no indication of the spermicide in the hospital report, Norris said.

"Do justice for my clients," Norris said.