

Waldorf man on trial for alleged rape

Defendant arguing sex was consensual

By JESSI STICKEL
jstickel@somdnews.com

A 25-year-old Waldorf man was on trial this week for allegedly raping a 33-year-old Waldorf woman in a motel in June 2016.

The victim told the police that Robert L. Stevenson, 25, of Waldorf raped her twice in her room at the Waldorf Hotel.

The victim testified in the trial, presided by Circuit Court Judge H. Jay West, that after hearing a knock on her hotel room door around 12 a.m. June 30, 2016, she opened the door to an unknown man, who was later identified as Stevenson. She said Stevenson asked to use the restroom and she allowed him to enter her room, followed by another unknown man.

The victim said after the man used the restroom, he sat on the bed with her and asked her questions about her having a boyfriend. She said he then took her clothes off. During

that time the victim said “no” repeatedly to the defendant, Assistant State’s Attorney John Stackhouse told the jury in opening arguments.

She said he then raped her, and after she used the restroom, he raped her again. The victim said that the other unknown man then had her perform a sex act on him.

She said that the two men then left the room.

The victim called the police reporting a rape the night of June 30, 2016, after seeing and talking to a friend. She told the 911 operator that she was “too afraid to call,” according to the 911 call played in court.

After the victim told the members of the jury that she repeatedly told the defendant “no” when taking her clothes off, Stackhouse asked about how many times she thinks she told Stevenson “no.”

“At least 10 times,” the victim said.

Before leaving the stand, the victim told the jury, “I feel like I didn’t deserve this, and I don’t want it to happen again.”

Private attorney Latica Jones, who was contracted as Stevenson’s public defender, argued that the defendant had consensual sex with the victim on the previous day and that this alleged rape never happened.

Jones told the jury that Stevenson had consensual sex with the victim “on June 29 [2016].”

Cpl. William Smith with the Charles County Sheriff’s Office, who responded to the victim’s report of a rape, testified in the trial.

Smith said that when he saw and talked to the victim in her hotel room, she appeared to be “embarrassed,” “guarded” and “shy.”

He also said that the victim never used the word “rape” when talking to him.

Det. Webster with the CCSO Special Victims Unit also responded to the Waldorf Hotel soon after the victim’s report of a rape.

Webster told the jury that the victim told him in an interview at the Waldorf station that the defendant never used the bath-

room, and that he raped her four times during the time that he was there on July 30, 2016.

Webster also showed the victim a photo of Stevenson and asked her if she knew him, and the victim said no. He asked her if that was the person who she claimed raped her, and she said, “I don’t know, maybe.”

Webster said after getting a warrant for a sample of Stevenson’s DNA, he went to Stevenson’s residence, which was also presented to the jury in an audio recording. Webster showed Stevenson a photo of the victim and asked if he knew her, and Stevenson said no. Webster asked if he ever had sex with her, and he said no.

Webster said he then collected a DNA sample from the defendant, and it was sent to the Maryland State Police Forensic Science Division to be compared to the DNA found on the victim in the a Sexual Assault Nurse Examination conducted on June 30, 2016, at the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Cen-

ter. “The two profiles matched each other,” said Julie Kempton, a forensic scientist for the Maryland State Police. The results were concluded on Feb. 16 that Stevenson’s DNA was found on the victim from the sexual assault exam.

Jones argued that the sexual assault kit from the victim was tainted since there was two pieces of evidence tape sealing it, instead of the one that is provided within the kit, meaning that the kit had been sealed and reopened.

The kit was opened by a detective at the CCSO Forensic Science Unit in order to insert the nurse’s written report of what the victim told her at the hospital.

Sgt. Erica Budd, director of the Forensic Science Unit (FSU) at the sheriff’s office, took the stand and told the court that the FSU “may need to open the [sexual assault kit] envelope to add the [nurse’s] report to it.”

Budd explained that it is OK to do that because each of the DNA samples are in its own sealed envelope as well.

The trial is ongoing as of press time Thursday.

Twitter: @JessicalndyNews

IRS representative talks taxes at Waldorf West Library

Prospective business owners learn about filings, staying organized

By CHARLIE WRIGHT
cwright@somdnews.com

Dealing with tax returns and record maintenance can be difficult for up-and-coming companies and fledgling startups, so the Waldorf West Library brought in a representative from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on Tuesday to help residents turn their side hustles and

hobbies into legitimate small businesses.

The program for aspiring entrepreneurs delved into how to get a business started and then how to operate it within the guidelines of the IRS. Stakeholder liaison for the IRS Annette Harris-Davis delivered the presentation in front of just over a dozen interested citizens in the downstairs meeting room of the library. The 19-year veteran handles outreach and communications for the organization, and her overarching message centered on tax education to avoid IRS involvement.

“The goal here is voluntary compliance,” Harris-Davis said. “One of the things I have always believed ... is that if people understood taxes a little more, there would be less issues with compliance. People would be more inclined to be compliant if they understood what they were doing.”

Shannon Bland, the public service associate at the Waldorf West branch, introduced Harris-Davis and was responsible for bringing her to the library. Bland said they try to offer at least one small business or entrepreneur program

every month and rent out the library’s meeting rooms for business purposes. Waldorf West will host a class for writing proposals in November followed by a program about business plans in December.

Harris-Davis began by delineating between a potential business and merely a hobby. She said if the owner has not generated a profit in five to seven years, they might not have the makings of a business venture and should consider adjusting their company. The next step is to identify a business structure, which varies from a corporation to a partnership to a limited liability company, among other options. The business structure will dictate the required income tax return needed from the owner, and legal limita-

tions change based on the type of entity.

Tax returns themselves can be tricky, and Harris-Davis recommended using a third party for preparation. The IRS has a directory of reputable tax return preparers in addition to representatives who can assist in these matters. Harris-Davis urged the audience to also have a basic understanding of the tax return process in order to make sure their paperwork is being done properly.

“Know enough to know when someone is not doing what they’re supposed to do,” Harris-Davis said. “I’m not saying you have to be a tax guru ... but know enough to know when it’s not right.”

Organization was a common theme of the program, specifically to guard against a potential inquiry

by the IRS. Harris-Davis said there’s always a possibility the department could call about something that happened years ago, so accurate records and neat files are important.

“Make sure that your records are well maintained,” Harris-Davis said. “If not for yourself, for the love and sanity of your accountant or your payroll service provider.”

Even the most organized and successful small businesses can be done in by a catastrophe, so Harris-Davis suggested a predetermined course of action for the worst-case scenarios. She shared that 70 to 80 percent of small businesses fail to come back from natural disasters, a startling figure and all the more relevant given the recent hurricane destruction in our country.

“This is one of the more timely messages,” Harris-Davis said. “Having a plan on what to do in case of a disaster is going to keep you in business.”

Harris-Davis closed with a plug for the IRS website and its new media resources. The organization offers a virtual workshop video for small business owners as well as a list of recommended IRS publications. Additional information and resources can be found on said website at irs.gov.

Twitter: @CharlieIndyNews

Buy one, get one

50% off

Energy Efficient WINDOWS

PLUS

ZERO MONEY DOWN

ZERO INTEREST

UNTIL 2019



Energy Efficient Windows
Winter is right around the corner!

Locally Made
in our own factory in Upper Marlboro, MD

Buy Direct
from our factory— not a middleman

MENTION THE WALDORF INDEPENDENT TO RECEIVE DISCOUNT

Call for a FREE Window Upgrade Assessment

1.301.850.5229

OR VISIT US AT WWW.THOMPSONCREEK.COM



THOMPSON CREEK

WINDOW COMPANY®

*Thompson Creek is neither a broker nor a lender. Financing is provided by Synchrony Financial under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and Synchrony Financial, all subject to credit requirements and satisfactory completion of finance documents. Thompson Creek does not assist with, counsel or negotiate financing. No Monthly Interest if Paid in Full Within 18 Months (Deferred Interest). Offer applies only to purchases made with your Synchrony Bank Credit Card. No monthly interest will be charged on the promo purchase if you pay the promo purchase amount in full 18 Months. If you do not, monthly interest will be charged on the promo purchase from the purchase date. Fixed monthly payments are required equal to 2.50% of the highest balance applicable to this promo purchase until paid in full. The fixed monthly payment will be rounded to the next highest whole dollar and may be higher than the minimum payment that would be required if the purchase was a non-promotional purchase. Depending on purchase amount, promotion length and payment allocation the required minimum monthly payments may or may not pay off purchase by end of promotional period. Regular account terms apply to non-promotional purchases and, after promotion ends, to promotional purchases, except that the fixed monthly payment will continue to be required until the promo purchase is paid in full. For new accounts: Purchase APR is 26.99%. Minimum Monthly Interest Charge is \$2. Account Activation Fee is \$29. Existing cardholders should see their credit card agreement for their applicable terms. Subject to credit approval. Discount applied at time of contact execution. All purchase prices are to be calculated prior to application of discount. Excludes previous orders, and installations. Offer valid only on Premium and Ultimate windows. All products include professional installation. Offer is not valid with any other advertised or unadvertised discounts or promotions. Limit of one discount per purchase contract. Void where prohibited by law or regulation. Offer may be cancelled without prior notice. Offer has no cash value and is open to new customers only. Offer only valid 9/30/17, MHC #125294, VA # 2705-117858-A, DC Permanent # 8246



RESCHEDULED AUCTION DATE

PUBLIC AUCTION

SATURDAY SEPT. 30TH

12 NOON

240-419-2359 • SmallwoodSelfStorage.com

11615 Rubina Pl • Waldorf, MD 20602

(off of Smallwood Drive Next to Domino's Pizza)

Office Hours: Mon - Sat: 8am - 6pm, Sun: 10am - 4pm



Dreams Thrive Here

Auto Loans



Rates as low as

1.64% APR¹

Up to 36 months

Apply today for an Andrews Federal auto loan!

andrewsfcu.org | (301) 909-7922

Federally Insured by NCUA. For current rates, visit our website at andrewsfcu.org. ¹1.64% rate is a fixed-rate on New Auto Loans for a maximum of 36 months. Payment example: for a \$20,000 New Auto loan for a term of 36 months, with a 1.64% APR, the monthly payment will be \$569.80. Used auto loan rates available at andrewsfcu.org. A New Vehicle is a vehicle that is of the current or previous model year (up to a maximum of one year old) and is currently owned by the original owner of the vehicle. Andrews Federal does not finance vehicles more than 10 model years old unless they are deemed a Classic vehicle. APR (Annual Percentage Rate) listed is the lowest available rate. Additional rates and terms are available for qualified applicants; rates, terms and conditions vary based on creditworthiness and qualifications and are subject to change. Subject to credit and collateral approval. Minimum loan amount is \$5,000. Maximum loan amount is \$150,000. Loan amount cannot exceed 120% of the MSRP or NADA value of vehicle. Existing Andrews Federal vehicle loans cannot be refinanced for these rates/terms unless you are financing an additional amount of \$5,000 or more plus the existing loan balance. Auto loan rates effective as of 9/1/2017 and are subject to change. Additional restrictions may apply. Must be a member of the credit union to open any loan account. Membership eligibility required. Our field of membership includes Active Duty or Retired Military personnel (or their spouses, dependents or dependent survivors) of Joint Base Andrews, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and military installations in central Germany, Belgium, and The Netherlands; as well as over 200 employer groups throughout Maryland, Virginia and New Jersey. We also have nationwide membership eligibility through the American Consumer Council and anyone who lives, works, attends school or worships in Washington, D.C. Visit andrewsfcu.org to find out how you can join!