

SEXUAL ASSAULT TRIAL

Thompson not guilty on 5 of 9 counts

Alleged rape on Vermilion

By **JIM ROMSAAS**
City Editor

VIRGINIA — Ryan David Thompson was found not guilty Wednesday night on five of nine charges against him stemming from last summer's alleged rape and assault at a Lake Vermilion cabin.

The jury of eight men and four women deliberated for about five hours before finding Thompson innocent of the most serious felony counts — two each of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and kidnapping, and one of second-degree assault.

He was found guilty of terroristic threats, false

imprisonment, fifth-degree assault and interference with an emergency call.

Both Thompson and his mother Lori openly wept as the jury came in and the verdicts were read one by one.

"Thank God it's over," said Lori Thompson, who shared a tearful hug with her husband Barry and her son in the courtroom.

"It's been a long eight-nine months," said Barry Thompson.

Because Thompson has been in jail for about nine months, defense attorney Fred Goetz of Minneapolis said the defendant has effectively served his

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State, defense differ on charges

sentence. The sentencing guidelines for false imprisonment, for example, calls for a jail term of one year and one day, he said.

Assistant St. Louis County Attorney Karl Sundquist had little to say after the verdicts.

"That's what we have the jury for." He said the jurors did their job well.

In his closing argument, Goetz said the accusations were not true and the case was based on the then 33-year-old victim seeking revenge on Thompson.

Goetz also contended Thompson feared for his own life and for those of his two children. He said Thompson testified that the victim told him she was the daughter of mob boss John Gotti's brother and the call for a hit had already been made.

While the story sounds crazy, even according to Goetz, the defense attorney said Thompson was told that more than once and he believed it.

Sundquist called it a "far-fetched" story in his summation. "It was taken from 'The Sopranos,'" he said, referring to the television show.

After the verdict came in, Judge Gary Pagliaccetti ordered a pre-sentence investigation and a domestic assessment and set sentencing for 1 p.m. May 7. Thompson's bail was also dropped to \$10,000 and a supervised release evaluation was to occur today.

The charges stemmed from Thompson allegedly becoming "jealous" of the victim's actions at the Vermilion Club July 22 and coming "unglued" at the cabin early Sunday morning, the criminal complaint says.

In closing arguments Wednesday morning, Sundquist stressed that Thompson had a previous pattern of being aggressive, which included putting a robe tie around her neck and ripping off her dress on another occasion. "This was not all right,"

he said.

It also showed how he reacts when he doesn't get his way, Sundquist said.

The night in question, July 22, was sparked by alcohol, according to Sundquist.

"The fueling moment," he said, is when she saw and talked to a coach for her child's soccer team. Thompson then got angry and jealous, he said, wanted her to leave the club and started to get physical with her.

"She doesn't want to go with him" and jumps out of the car twice. He put her back in the car both times and went to the cabin. "He pinned her up against that mirror" in the bathroom and sexually assaulted her, he said.

She grabbed his cell phone and called 911. "Listen to her voice," Sundquist said. "She is scared that he is going to kill her."

Sundquist told the jury that the victim was later threatened with a kitchen knife during intercourse and was prevented from leaving the cabin.

In his summation, Goetz said the accusations of rape and kidnapping were not true.

After the trial, Goetz said "the physical evidence didn't support the allegations."

He also added that the accuser "exaggerated" what happened that night. "It was not a rape. It was not a kidnapping."

Thompson admitted in the complaint to having sex with the victim but said it had been consensual. He also admitted being physical with the girl, that he held her down, threatened her, and pushed her around. He said he did not punch or slap her, according to the complaint.

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