

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Notice of Sentencing
Convicted Rapist Sentenced to Life in Prison
State vs. Mariano Delfino Diego-Tercero

February 12, 2024 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that on Friday, February 9, Chief Superior Court Judge Ellen McElyea sentenced Mariano Diego-Tercero, 35, of Canton, to life in prison following his February 2 jury conviction for charges of rape, aggravated assault (2 counts), and criminal attempt to commit rape.

Charges stem from a Canton Police Department investigation that began in November 2022, when a woman reported that she was raped by Diego-Tercero in Canton. The woman said that Diego-Tercero placed a knife to her neck while forcing himself on her. The defendant was known to the woman and her family. During the five-day trial, the victim, law enforcement officers, and a sexual assault nurse who is an expert on trauma testified for the State. Additionally, a second woman provided testimony concerning similar sexual predatory acts committed by the defendant at a different time. The jury deliberated for approximately three hours before finding Diego-Tercero guilty of all charges.

At the sentencing hearing, the court heard victim impact statements describing feelings of humiliation, helplessness, and despair as a result of the defendant's actions.

“Mariano Diego-Tercero used power and control to manipulate the woman in this case, raping her, stripping her of dignity, and shaming her into silence. It took incredible bravery for this young woman to come forward to report these crimes, and it took 12 members of our community to see the truth and convict this man for what he is, a rapist,” said Assistant District Attorney Alana Driscoll of the Special Victims Unit. “This defendant is nothing but a wolf in sheep's clothing. He found a vulnerable young woman, and he preyed upon her. He created a façade, portraying himself as an older Christian man, like a brother, just wanting to help the less fortunate. “

Judge McElyea sentenced the defendant to life in prison. He will serve at least 30 years in prison before being eligible for parole and will be on the sex offender registry for the remainder of his life. He is also forbidden to have contact of any kind with the victim or her family members.

“Statistics show that these types of crimes are severely underreported. It is not easy for an individual victimized in this way to report the crime and testify in a jury trial, telling her story to a courtroom of strangers. Her tremendous courage cannot be overstated,” said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “I feel certain that the bravery of this young woman has saved future women from being victimized in this way. Through this jury conviction and sentencing, our community is now safe from a dangerous man.”

The case was investigated by the Canton Police Department and prosecuted by Assistant District Alana Driscoll, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Meaghan Frankish, of the Special Victims Unit, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

If you or someone you know has been affected by sexual assault, please contact LiveSafe Resources, livesaferesources.org, 770-427-3390 (24/7 crisis hotline). In case of an emergency, call 911.

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The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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