

GI on Okinawa found guilty of adultery, but cleared of rape

Soldier demoted but allowed to remain in Army

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By: David Allen

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Spc. Luis Bonilla tearfully pleaded Friday to stay in the Army after being convicted of adultery, giving false statements and committing an indecent sexual act.

And that's just what the six-member court-martial panel gave him. He was sentenced to 30 days' confinement and reduction in rank from E-4 to E-3, reprimanded and fined \$1,500.

Bonilla, 38, 505th Quartermaster Battalion, 10th Area Support Group, had shed tears just hours before, when the panel returned after a three-day trial with not-guilty verdicts on charges of rape, attempted rape, sodomy, housebreaking and three counts of sexual assault. "I feel very relieved," he said during a recess.

His wife, Jeannette, 32, sitting two rows behind him in the Camp Foster courtroom, also dabbed her eyes. "I never doubted him," she said of her husband of 13 years. "I know what he's capable of and he's not capable of what he was charged with."

She said it has been rough since the first of the charges — that he tried to rape a female soldier on Feb. 1 during an exercise in Hokkaido — came to light in February. "But, I had to put it in the back of my head," she said. "I had four kids to care for."

Bonilla addressed most of an unsworn statement during his trial's sentencing phase Friday afternoon to his wife and kids. "It is very difficult for me to see her hear much of my wrongdoing again in this trial," he said, reading from a prepared statement. "For someone who loves his wife as much as I do, I have done a terrible job of showing it over the past couple of years."

As the Hokkaido attempted-rape charge wound its way through Torii Station's legal system this past spring, two more women said Bonilla also attacked them. One said he fondled her in a parked car sometime in November 2003 on Torii Station. Another said he snuck into her Kadena home while her husband was at work on Nov. 30, 2004, raping and sodomizing her.

Bonilla told the panel, "I do not ask this court to forgive me. Rather, I humbly ask this court

to have mercy on my family ... I greatly desire the opportunity to re-earn the trust of my fellow soldiers.”

The prosecutor, Capt. James Du Pré, had sought at least six months’ confinement and a bad conduct discharge, saying, “There’s no place in the Army for a soldier with his lack of morals and integrity.”

Capt. James Culp, lead defense attorney, said the prosecution’s case consisted of “stories that hover between those inspired by actual events and fantasy.” But none were true, he argued.

Culp said the most serious charge, the Kadena rape, was consensual, initiated by Bonilla’s accuser — who was drinking with him the night before. He also shrugged off prosecution claims the woman was so scared when Bonilla was inside her home that she failed to call for help, even after he fell asleep in her bed.

After the sentencing, as Bonilla prepared to be taken into custody, his wife hugged him and smiled. “We’ll deal with it,” she said.

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