

## Roland Park rape verdict

*Man guilty of all charges*

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An east Baltimore man was convicted Dec. 15 of robbing and raping a Roland Park grandmother at gunpoint in 2007.

Roger Ervin was convicted by a jury in Baltimore City Circuit Court of all 10 counts he faced, including first-degree rape, first-degree armed robbery, first-degree burglary, first-degree assault charges, and handgun and sex offense charges.

The jury deliberated for less than three hours.

Ervin faces up to life in prison plus 118 years. Sentencing was scheduled for Feb. 12 before Circuit Court Judge John Addison Howard.

Ervin took the witness stand Dec. 14 and denied involvement in the crime.

"I don't even know where Colorado Avenue is," testified Ervin, 48, of the 3500 block of Dudley Avenue.

Police said they found a DNA match in the state's database linking Ervin to the crime, which occurred around 8 p.m. on Aug. 23, 2007.

The last witness to testify during a two-day trial in Baltimore City Circuit Court, Ervin said he had been working "stripping the floors" at Morgan State University, and was at work or at home around the time of the crime.

Asked by his attorney, Margaret Mead, whether he knew where Roland Park was, he said, "Not really."

Despite Ervin's denials of knowledge or involvement, Baltimore City Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer McAllister told jurors to trust DNA evidence.

"The question is, who committed this crime?" McAllister said. "How do you know that Roger Ervin committed this crime?"

"The defendant left part of himself at the crime scene."

McAllister showed the jury numerical charts that she said prove to "a mathematical certainty," based on the DNA evidence, that Ervin attacked the victim and "slobbered all over her."

But the jury heard that Ervin was not the first suspect in the case.

A grand jury indicted Ervin in May of 2008, after police had charged a different man in the crime.

Police initially charged Chaz Ricks, 20, of Gwynn Oak, after the victim gave police a description of her attackers.

A police sketch artist depicted a rendering of a suspect, which a detective identified as Ricks, police said.

But a month later, prosecutors dropped all charges against Ricks, after DNA evidence proved he was not involved, they said.

"Chaz Ricks was cleared through DNA," McAllister told jurors.

The 59-year-old victim told police she was in her kitchen in the 700 block of Colorado Avenue when two men she didn't know entered her house, and one raped her during a robbery.

The woman had returned home from shopping and had left her keys in the front door while retrieving groceries, police said.

After unloading the items, she began making dinner, and while standing at the stove, she heard footsteps behind her, according to court documents.

"When she turned around, the suspects were in her kitchen, both pointing handguns at her," detective Sarah Connolly wrote in charging documents.

The suspects took her wallet -- which had \$7 -- and then, one forced her upstairs, where he raped her, police said.

The woman told the suspects that she "was a grandmother and was to have a party for her grandchildren," according to charging documents.

The woman told the man who raped her that she couldn't get up because she felt "paralyzed," and begged him, "Please don't rape me," charging documents state.

Police said they received notice on March 11, 2008, that Ervin's DNA matched the rapist's.

Ervin's DNA was on file because of his conviction in 1985 on charges of committing robbery with a deadly weapon in Baltimore County, as well as his conviction in 1992, on charges of conspiracy to commit theft in Anne Arundel County, according to court records.

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