

BABYLON, HER CASE DIDN'T ADD UP, JURORS SAY, MAN ACCUSED OF RAPING HIS FIANCEE'S FORMER GIRLFRIEND HAD FACED UP TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON

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Quotes: 'I think it could have been a case of a woman scorned.'

Not believing a Wyandanch woman's story that she was raped by the fiancee of her lesbian former girlfriend, a jury acquitted a West Babylon man of all charges yesterday.

The woman, 44, whom Newsday is not naming because she maintains she was the victim of a sex crime, shook her head and cried in the Suffolk criminal courtroom in Riverside as the jury announced its "not guilty" verdict after about an hour of deliberation.

She declined to comment as she left the court.

The woman testified last week that Benjamin Bryant, 44, forced himself on her as the two were chatting in his van after running into each other at a bar. The woman, who dated Bryant's fiancee, Katherine Lomax, for several years, said Bryant resented her for staying in contact with Lomax.

But Bryant's attorney, Michael Brown, of Central Islip, said his client was set up by the woman, who was angry that Bryant had recently impregnated Lomax.

Bryant testified that it was the accuser who forced herself on him in the van. The woman, who did not have any injuries, conceded in her testimony that after the Babylon incident, her first phone call was to Lomax to relate her version of events.

One juror, who declined to give his name, said the woman's story "just didn't hold water.

"I didn't think she was credible," said the Huntington man, 64. "I think it could have been a case of a woman scorned."

Assistant District Attorney Melissa Price said afterward she completely

believed in the woman and said it was Bryant's story that "didn't make sense." She disputed Bryant's claims that he was set up. "It just doesn't play out," she said.

Bryant celebrated in the hallway of the court with Lomax and the couple's newborn daughter. Bryant declined to comment, but Brown said he was thankful the jury believed in his client, who faced 25 years in prison if convicted.

"They saw through the web of lies," Brown said. "This is an innocent guy who was wrongly accused."