

Lawyer says suspect was raped

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A Greenlawn teenager who prosecutors say plotted the killing of a Huntington Station man in February should be considered a victim because the slain man raped her days before his death, the girl's attorney said yesterday in a Riverhead courtroom.

As Marisela Bonilla-Cruz, 17, was arraigned on a murder charge in Suffolk County Court, her attorney said the girl took her revenge on Alexander Santos Argueta-Ventura, 24, after he sexually assaulted her days before he was found dead Feb. 27 on Gates Avenue in Brentwood.

"It is our position that she in fact is the victim," attorney Michael Brown of Central Islip told Judge William Condon.

Prosecutors say Bonilla-Cruz hatched the murder plot with her brother, Luis Bonilla-Cruz, 19, of Greenlawn, and a friend, Juan Argurta-Gonzales, 24, of Huntington Station, on Feb. 26 after the girl said she had been raped.

The suspects lured Argueta-Ventura into a car, saying they were going to a party, then stabbed him with a knife and broken beer bottles, prosecutors have said.

Marisela Bonilla-Cruz pleaded not guilty yesterday to a second-degree murder indictment handed up by a Suffolk grand jury. Condon ordered her held without bail and told her to return to court April 27 before State Supreme Court Justice C. Randall Hinrichs.

Assistant District Attorney James Chalifoux said in court that Marisela Bonilla-Cruz helped plot Argueta-Ventura's death because she said she was a rape victim.

"I don't have any evidence to support her allegation or refute it," Chalifoux said outside court. "Irrespective of whether a crime was committed against her, based upon her actions, she is charged with murder in the second degree."

He said in court she participated in Argueta-Ventura's slaying by handing broken bottles to her brother and Argurta-Gonzales as they stabbed the victim to death.

After the stabbing, the three suspects fled from a Hempstead bus station to Maryland, where they were picked up by authorities on March 4, police have said.

Luis Bonilla-Cruz and Argurta-Gonzales are scheduled to be arraigned on a grand jury indictment today in Riverhead. They were charged last month with second-degree murder.