

# Trial For 16-Year-Old Accused Of Rape Begins

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State prosecutors began their case Tuesday against a 16-year-old male juvenile accused of raping a 12-year-old girl by putting his alleged victim on the stand to testify against him.

John K. Edison, who was arrested in July on charges of second-degree rape, watched as his accuser recounted her story in open court.

The alleged victim, now 13, testified that she and her cousin left their adult relative's house the night of July 4 with two young males, one of them the accused, to Edison's house in Great Mills.

The alleged victim testified that Edison forced her from the couch she was sitting on down the hallway of his home and forcibly raped her as well as hit her with a belt.

The victim's cousin and the other male who she said was there at the time did nothing to prevent it, she testified.

Assistant State's Attorney Julie White, the lead prosecutor on the case, told the jury in her opening statement that the victim in the case had maintained her story of being dragged by the defendant to his bedroom after coming with her cousin and the other male over to Edison's house.

Edison, on the other hand, White claimed, had at first denied that there

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were any girls at his house to police when interviewed as a suspect and then changed his story three times, finally saying that the sexual contact between he and the girl had been consensual.

"In each one he lied," White said of Edison's statements to police about the events of July 4 leading to July 5.

White also told jurors that DNA evidence presented by the state would show that Edison had raped the girl.

Kevin McDevitt, Edison's defense attorney, said that medical exams taken of the alleged victim after the incident showed that there appeared to be no bruising or other damage to her body or private areas.

He also said that the DNA evidence that the state would present was so insignificant that it "is not consistent with rape."

On cross examination of the victim, the

young girl said she had not flirted with Edison prior to the alleged incident and did try to push him away, but admitted that she did not scream or cry out for help.

She also admitted that she and her female cousin had stayed at Edison's residence for three hours — from the time they arrived, including an uncertain amount of time during which the alleged incident took place — before they left to return to her relative's home at about 7 a.m. July 5.

After Edison's arrest for second-degree rape, second-degree sex offense and second-degree assault he was held in the detention center on a criminal information. His family protested as did his lawyer for an emergency bond hearing for Edison in August but was denied.

Subsequent hearings to send Edison to a juvenile program, and then to contest the legality of his detention were defeated in circuit court.

The trial for Edison is set to last as long as four days.