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PRESS RELEASE

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CHICO MAN FOUND GUILTY OF ATTEMPTED RAPE DURING HOME INVASION FACES LIFE IN PRISON

A Butte County jury today found a Chico man guilty of attempted rape during a home invasion, assault with a deadly weapon, and several enhancements following a two-week trial.

Francisco Gutierrez-Gomez, 40, of Chico, was found guilty on all charges after less than 90 minutes of jury deliberation. He will next appear in court on February 20, 2026, for sentencing, where he will face at least 11 years to life in prison.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the jury heard testimony from several witnesses, including Chico Police officers, criminalists from the California Department of Justice, and the young woman who was a survivor of the vicious attack.

Jurors heard that on May 3, 2024, at approximately 2:45 a.m., officers were called to an apartment complex in north Chico. There, the officers located the 22-year-old woman, who reported that she had just been assaulted in her apartment by a masked stranger. She had sustained multiple injuries, including cuts, bruises, and signs of strangulation.

The young woman testified that she was alone in her bedroom when she got up to get a snack and was surprised by an intruder in her home, shirtless and wearing a ski mask, who immediately began violently assaulting her, including attempting to strangle her, smother her with a pillow, and striking her repeatedly in the head with a rock.

She told the jurors she fought back against her attacker, who ultimately fled the apartment, leaving a hat and a pocketknife behind. The responding officers secured the items, which were sent to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) forensic laboratory for DNA analysis. DOJ confirmed a DNA match between the hat and knife and a DNA sample that Gutierrez-Gomez provided during a Butte County Jail booking for an unrelated domestic violence arrest a few days before the apartment attack.

Jurors were informed that Gutierrez-Gomez lived in the same apartment complex as the victim, less than 100 feet from her front door, with a clear line of sight to the stairs leading to her home.

At the conclusion of the two-week trial, the trial prosecutor, Mike Tufaro, pointed to the overwhelming evidence proving that Gutierrez-Gomez was the masked intruder and that his intent was clearly to rape the young woman.

Although Gutierrez-Gomez did not testify during the trial, his defense attorney conceded that his client was the person who entered the apartment and struggled with the victim, but argued that there was insufficient evidence to prove that he had the intent to rape. Instead, he proposed that Gutierrez-Gomez was there to steal,

which led to an unintended violent struggle during an attempt to escape the apartment.

In his argument to the jury, prosecutor Tufaro told the jury they could determine Gutierrez-Gomez's intent from both what he did and what he did not do. Tufaro pointed out that the intruder entered undetected, shirtless and wearing a mask, and immediately attacked the young woman, escalating the violence as she heroically fought back. Tufaro pointed to the fact that the defendant did not steal or try to steal anything, showing his intent was not theft. Also, the fact that the defendant removed the young woman's sweatshirt after he knocked her unconscious and pursued her deeper into the house and away from the apartment door was only consistent with one motive.

At the end of his closing argument to the jury, Tufaro pointed at the witness box and told the jury that the only reason the defendant was unable to complete the rape was that he chose the wrong victim, "because in fact she is not a victim. She is a survivor. She survived everything he did to her, and she fought, and fought, and fought, and won."



Francisco Gutierrez-Gomez