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Justice takes a holiday for real cyber-sex victim

FOR the second year in a row for Oliver Jovanovic, justice took a vacation on this holiday weekend for giving thanks.

The Manhattan district attorney's office gave, all right — it gave Jovanovic 15 years to life for a kidnap-torture-rape that never happened.

And we, the people, are supposed to thank this district attorney's office for keeping us safe from the likes of Oliver Jovanovic.

This week, Oliver's mother, Sabena, a first violinist for the Met, handed me a massive file. More accurately, it is a cross between a detailed legal brief and a documentary book.

Its title is "Cyber-Hoax" and it explains in cold minutia how her son, Oliver, a brilliant 31-year-old microbiologist got the shaft deeper than a gold mine.

The title of this document plays

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off what became known as the first "cyber-sex" case in history, which put the Manhattan district attorney's office on page one all over the country.

"We are absolutely desperate. We seem powerless. Oliver has been in jail for 19 months and the appeal has dragged on for 10 months and still nothing," Mrs. Jovanovic was saying.

While I have rarely met an inmate who doesn't claim he is innocent, this is one of the worst miscarriages of justice since "Hanging Judge" Jeffereys chose rope over the law.

Recap: On Dec. 5, 1996, Jovanovic was arrested for the rape-torture-kidnap of a 20-year-old Barnard student he met on the Internet and who later became known as "Madam X."



OLIVER JOVANOVIC
Another Thanksgiving in jail.

She claimed that she had been sodomized with a 2-foot stick and burned with boiling candle wax, and that she was so brutally bitten on her breast, she bled. She also claimed she had been tied up for 20 hours before she wrestled herself free and escaped Jovanovic's apartment.

No weapon, like a 2-foot stick, was found. No blood was found. The only evidence of sexual contact, and pardon the reference, was a single pubic hair found in the panties belonging to Madam X. Tests showed that the pubic hair belonged to neither Oliver nor the so-called victim.

In court, a doctor testified that three days after she said she was raped, she submitted to a physical examination. There was no evidence of any physical intrusion into her body. No evidence of sperm, no bruises, no bite marks, and not a trace of a burn.

Judge William Wetzel, a political hack, swallowed the prosecution's argument — first laid out by assistant District Attorney Linda Fairstein — hook, line and sinker. Oliver Jovanovic was squarely on the tracks of being railroaded.

Jovanovic told me from jail: "It's hard to grasp I'm here. We went

on a date. We were in my apartment. We didn't even have any sex. Her allegations are so ridiculous, I don't know what to say."

Well, I can say something. The conduct of Judge Wetzel was close to judicial lunacy. Not only would he not allow testimony that the so-called victim had an extensive "chat-room file" describing her enthusiasm for sadomasochistic practices, but even talked on the Internet about wanting to be a director of a "snuff film," in which a sex slave would be slaughtered.

DNA and blood tests show that Oliver might as well have been in Kosovo at the time of the alleged torture.

You would think Linda Fairstein's office would have made a few inquiries, like talk to her family — as I did.

The grandmother and two aunts of Madam X told me she was a congenital liar, a thief and a con artist who once told a judge she never gets arrested for misdeeds because she gives sex to cops.

Oliver's girlfriend, Marinza Bruineman, who helped compile the information in "Cyber-Hoax," said, "Rape victims must be protected at all costs. But didn't anyone check her credibility — particularly after medical tests showed no injuries or evidence of sexual contact?"

Relatives of Madam X even revealed that she had falsely accused her father and uncle of rape when she was 17. It was learned she even put up a girlfriend to falsely accuse a boyfriend of rape. I mean, how much more do we need to spell the words "vicious wacko"?

In the meantime, the appeals court just doesn't seem to be moving off a dime. If the wheels of justice move slowly, then in this case it has ground to a halt.

Personally, I can only give thanks that, so far, I have never been caught in one of the Manhattan DA's jackpots. You won't catch me spitting on the sidewalk.