

Accuser in Naval Academy Rape Case Ends 24 Hours of Testimony

The female midshipman accusing three ex-U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen of rape ended testifying after her lawyer called defense lawyers' questioning repetitive. The midshipman concluded her testimony Sunday after the proceeding was recessed Saturday when the woman's attorney told the presiding officer her client was emotionally and physically spent from defense questioning, The Washington Post reported. The woman's attorney told Cmdr. Robert Monahan Jr. her client was being worn down by exhausting, repetitive questioning by three separate legal teams representing the defendants. She ended her testimony after spending 24 hours on the stand over five days. Burke said outside the hearing at the Washington Navy Yard there was "an intentional effort to exhaust the witness" so the proceedings would be halted, the Post said. The hearing concerns the night of April 14, 2012, after the accuser arrived at a party at an off-campus "football house," the Post said. She said she drank heavily and woke up unkempt with a sore back. Afterward she said she learned from friends and social media she had sex with multiple partners, including the three defendants -- football players Tra'ves Bush, 22, of Johnston, S.C.; Joshua Tate, 21, of Eight Mile, Ala.; and Eric Graham, 21, of Nashville. The three men, also charged with lying to investigators, denied wrongdoing. After the Article 32 hearing, similar to a civilian grand jury, the hearing officer will offer a recommendation to the academy superintendent, who will determine whether the case should go to court-martial. Under military law, the maximum penalty for rape is life in prison without the possibility of parole and a dishonorable discharge, Lisa Windsor, a former judge advocate, told the Post. Bush's graduation was delayed pending the outcome of the case. Graham is a senior, and Tate is a junior and remain at the academy, as does their accuser. Up to 26,000 service members said they were victims of unwanted sexual contact last year and 3,374 incidents of sexual assault were reported, the Defense Department said this year.