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Mustapha Ouanes, Member Of Saudi Prince's Entourage, Sentenced To 10 Years For Plaza Hotel Rape

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Despite arguments that any amount of jail time could kill him, a member of a Saudi prince's entourage was sentenced to 10 years on Thursday for raping a New York woman at the Plaza Hotel in 2010.

Mustapha Ouanes, 61, was convicted of rape and other crimes in February after forcing himself on a woman at his Plaza hotel suite. His attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the jury's verdict in light of Ouanes' coronary artery disease and worsening health after a 2008 heart attack, but the presiding judge flatly denied this argument.

Because of the crimes against him, Ouanes' health is "not sufficient basis for setting aside the conviction," Judge Daniel

McCollough said.

The defense paid more than \$3,500 to Dr. Stephen Rubenstein to review Ouanes' medical records and testify at the sentencing that his condition would likely worsen if incarcerated. But assistant district attorney Samuel David argued Ouanes' health could deteriorate even outside of custody. David added the granting the motion would undermine the judicial system and the jurors' decision.

"To grant that motion would make a mockery of all that effort and a mockery of the complainant's bravery," he said.

While Ouanes, who sat crouched over in his seat between his two attorneys, did not make a statement, the victim told the court that Ouanes acted with "false entitlement" because of his employment. The Saudi royal family was a client of the construction company that employed Ouanes, a Canadian and Algerian citizen. Ouanes spent half his time at the company traveling and working for a Saudi prince, Ouanes' attorney said at trial. He came to New York as part of the prince's entourage in 2010.

In the hotel room after the attack, the victim told the court Thursday, Ouanes told her to “go ahead” and call the police.

Early Jan. 26, 2010, David told jurors in February, Ouanes met the victim and her friend at a bar in the West Village. After sharing drinks there and at another bar, the victim left to smoke hashish with another friend. When she returned, the three went to Ouanes' Plaza Hotel two-room suite where they shared breakfast. Incapacitated from the hashish and alcohol, the victim, along with her friend, "passed out." When the women woke, Ouanes was having sex with the victim, who fought to free herself.

“His medical condition was severe long before this occurred,” David said Thursday.

Ouanes' age and appearance made him seem harmless to the women, so to suggest his age and health should be factors for dismissing the conviction or limiting the sentence is ironic, David said. “He made choices that got him there.”

As Judge McCollough announced the sentence, Ouanes' sister gasped in horror. Before the proceedings, some family and friends discussed the case together, saying they were equally shocked by the conviction.

“It's a railroading,” one woman said to another.

But the victim, who addressed the court, said she believed Ouanes was a violent sexual predator and likely committed sex crimes in the past. “I still get chills,” she said.