



Franklinton garage is sued months after alleged rape

Joe Brandt, *Daily News Staff Writer*

Thursday, May 21, 2015

AN ATTORNEY for a woman who allegedly was raped on New Year's Day inside a Franklinton parking garage is suing the company that owns it, arguing that its security must be improved.

The woman, 33, testified in a February preliminary hearing that Steven Woodson, 32, of Pittsburgh, raped her between two cars in the garage at 17th and Callowhill streets about 10:30 a.m. Jan. 1. She escaped after running naked in front of a passing car in the garage to get attention.

"I knew I had to save my life, my kids, my husband," the woman said, according to court transcripts. "I knew I had to get away from him at that point. I was going to die if I stayed."

Shanin Specter, of Center City law firm Kline & Specter, filed the civil suit May 7 in Common Pleas Court. That the incident happened is "an absolute unspeakable disgrace," Specter said in a phone interview yesterday.

A spokesman for Forest City, the Cleveland-based real-estate company that owns the garage - and the apartment building across Callowhill Street, One Franklin Town - declined to comment to the Daily News yesterday.

The company gave a statement to 6ABC on Tuesday saying:

"On the day of the incident in question, we did have roving security on duty in the parking garage. Unfortunately, no security system is perfect and we were not able to prevent this tragic incident."

Specter blamed a lack of attendants and cameras at the garage for the incident.

The garage is "essentially a magnet for a violent perpetrator," Specter said. "And this one, he was no dumbbell, he knew exactly what he was doing. . . . He picked the place where he could perform this act."

Few of the sun rays washing over Philadelphia yesterday afternoon made it into the garage, and there was no attendant at the front entrance shortly before 5 p.m. Tuesday.