Man drugs wife, invites dozens of strangers to rape her

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A French retiree goes on trial Monday accused of recruiting dozens of strangers online to rape his wife after he drugged her into unconsciousness, in a case that has horrified the country.  
  
  
  
Fifty other men are also on trial in the southern city of Avignon alongside the main suspect, a 71-year-old former employee at France’s power utility EDF.  
  
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They are accused of raping the woman, who, her lawyers say, was so heavily sedated that she was not aware of the abuse.  
  
The trial will be “a horrible ordeal” for the woman, now in her 70s, who does not wish to be identified, said Antoine Camus, one of her lawyers.  
  
  
  
“For the first time, long after the fact, she will have to live through the rapes that she endured over 10 years,” he told AFP, adding that his client had “no recollection” of the abuses, which she only discovered in 2020.  
  
The woman could have asked for the trial to be held behind closed doors but didn’t, because “that’s what her attackers would have wanted”, Camus said.  
  
“She is completely determined to face them and her husband with whom she lived for 50 years but whom she knew nothing about, as she discovered at 68,” the lawyer said.  
  
Police began to investigate the defendant, Dominique P. in September 2020 when he was caught by a security guard secretly filming under the skirts of three women in a shopping centre.  
  
  
  
Examining his computer, police said they found thousands of pictures and videos of his wife, visibly unconscious and mostly in the fetal position.  
  
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The images are alleged to show dozens of instances of rape in the couple’s home in Mazan, a village of barely 6,000 inhabitants some 33 kilometres (21 miles) from Avignon in Provence.  
  
– Up to six times –  
  
Investigators also found chats on a site called coco.fr, since shut down by police, in which he recruited strangers to come to their home and have intercourse with his wife.  
  
  
  
Police counted a total of 92 rapes, committed by 72 men of whom 51 were formally identified.  
  
Dominique P. admitted to investigators that he gave his wife powerful tranquilisers, especially Temesta, an anxiety-reducing drug.  
  
The abuse started in 2011, when the couple was living near Paris, and continued after they moved to Mazan two years later.  
  
The suspect gave the men strict instructions so they would not wake her up when they abused her during the night.  
  
No aftershave or cigarette odour were allowed, and they had to warm their hands before touching her, and get undressed in the kitchen so they would not accidentally leave clothes behind in the bedroom.  
  
  
  
The husband took part in the rapes, filmed them and encouraged the other men using degrading language, according to prosecutors.  
  
No money exchanged hands.  
  
The accused rapists, aged between 21 and 68, included a forklift driver, a fire brigade officer, a company boss, and a journalist.  
  
Some were single, others married or divorced, and some family men. Most participated just once, some up to six times.  
  
– ‘Closer to coma’ –  
  
Their defence has been that they simply helped a libertine couple live out its sexual fantasies, but Dominique P. told investigators that they were all aware that his wife had been drugged without her knowledge.  
  
  
  
The trial will have to establish to what degree they understood the situation when they had intercourse with the woman whose state, an expert said, “was closer to a coma than to sleep”.  
  
Her husband told prosecutors that only three men left the house quickly after arriving, while all others proceeded to have intercourse with his wife.  
  
Dominique P., who said he himself was raped by a male nurse when he was nine, is ready to face “his family and his wife”, his lawyer Beatrice Zavarro told AFP.  
  
This trial may not be his last. He has also been charged with a 1991 murder and rape, which he denies, and an attempted rape in 1999, to which he admitted after conclusive DNA testing.  
  
  
  
“There is no such thing as a typical rapist profile,” Veronique Le Goaziou, a specialist on sexual violence, told AFP.  
  
“Many people will say he is crazy,” she said about Dominque P. “But that’s in no way certain. Only a tiny number of rapists are diagnosed with a real mental illness.”  
  
Psychiatric evaluations during the investigation have shown Dominique P. to be “a patriarch” and “a manipulator” with a “perverse” personality who used his wife as “bait”.  
  
The trial is set to run to December.