US Fugitive Convicted of Rape After Faking Death

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Nicholas Rossi leaves Edinburgh Sheriff Court after his extradition hearing, on June 28, 2023 in Edinburgh, Scotland. (Photo by Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images)  
  
A US man who faked his death and fled to Scotland to evade justice has been convicted of rape following his extradition back to his home country.  
  
Nicholas Rossi, 38, was found guilty of the 2008 sexual assault of his then-girlfriend by a jury in Salt Lake City on Wednesday.  
  
Rossi was first detained in 2021 after checking himself into a hospital in the Scottish city of Glasgow with Covid-19.  
  
Medical staff and police identified him by comparing his tattoos with pictures of Rossi on an Interpol wanted notice.  
  
It soon emerged that Rossi, using the name Nicholas Alahverdian, had earlier faked his death, creating an obituary stating he had died of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.  
  
He was extradited to the US in January 2024.  
  
During an appeal, Rossi claimed to be a victim of mistaken identity and that he was in fact an Irish orphan called Arthur Knight.  
  
He claimed he had been tattooed while comatose in the hospital and that his fingerprints had been modified.  
  
But the appeal against his removal was rejected. A judge found him to be “as dishonest and deceitful as he is evasive and manipulative,” and approved his extradition.  
  
Following the conviction, Salt Lake County District Attorney Sim Gill praised Rossi’s victim for her courage in taking the stand during the trial.  
  
“It’s her courage, her resilience in coming forward… that was the key to this case,” he said.  
  
Rossi now faces five years to life in prison, with his sentencing scheduled for October, the local Utah ABC affiliate reported.  
  
Rossi is also awaiting trial next month for another alleged rape in 2008.