

## Doctor cleared of attacking two women in intensive care

ELYRIA, Ohio (AP) — A doctor who was accused of attacking two women in the intensive care unit of a hospital three years ago has been acquitted, and the trial judge sharply criticized the prosecution evidence.

Judge Thomas Janas of Lorain County Common Pleas Court decided the case against Ashok Ramadugu was too weak. He said reasonable doubt exists.

Ramadugu was charged with two counts of rape and two counts of gross sexual imposition.

The two women involved

said Ramadugu, 43, originally from India.

He rushed from the crowded courtroom immediately after Janas' decision, followed closely by family and friends. Outside the courthouse, Ramadugu said that the accusations ruined his career.

"I was unable to practice medicine for two years," he said. "I lost my job, my partner, my reputation and my life savings."

Ramadugu took a leave of absence from EMH Regional Medical Center, about 40 miles southwest of Cleveland, in April

One of the women, hospitalized for acute multiple sclerosis, told police in June 1998 that she was attacked at EMH by a blond-haired, blue-eyed nurse named David. She could barely see at the time of the alleged assaults and was paralyzed.

But in court, she said her memory was limited to feeling pressure being placed on her breasts and genital area. She said that seven months after the alleged assault, she began having nightmares about a dark-haired, dark-skinned silhouette approaching her bed.

prosecutors' insistence that a mark on one of the women's legs was a bite made by Ramadugu.

Three forensic dentists testifying for the prosecution said 67 dental molds were taken from hospital employees and all could be excluded except Ramadugu. A defense expert said a catheter made the mark.

"Forensic bite mark identification is not the equivalent of forensic fingerprint identification," Janas wrote. "Unlike latent fingerprints, which are unique to an individual, bite marks are not."

"were suffering from severe medical problems which, together with medications, caused confusion, affected their ability to see and their ability to accurately recall the events occurring around them," Janas wrote in the decision Thursday.

Both women testified during the eight-day trial that their own dreams helped them identify Ramadugu as their attacker. One woman's dream specifically included Ramadugu. The other remembered a dark-skinned, dark-haired silhouette.

"If a person can be accused and charged based on someone's dreams, you are not safe,"

1999 after he was indicted. Hospital spokeswoman Lois Koehler said the medical board would have to vote whether to reinstate Ramadugu if he wants to return.

"I just want to move on with my life," Ramadugu said.

Lorain County's chief criminal prosecutor, Jonathan Rosenbaum, and the two women declined to comment on the verdict.

Rosenbaum attempted to build a case against Ramadugu by linking the women's dreams and the teeth marks from a bite with other evidence that he said pointed only to the doctor.

The other woman claimed she was assaulted twice at EMH in March 1998 and that a nurse witnessed the incident but left the room. The woman was gravely ill from a severe diabetic attack and expected to die, according to court testimony. She did not report the alleged assaults while in the hospital, but testified that she later had dreams of being attacked.

At trial, she pointed at Ramadugu as her attacker.

After the verdict, Ramadugu said the allegations consisted of "planted memories by the police."

The judge also questioned