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DA Says Counselor Targeted 'Damaged' Teens To Sexually Abuse

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Former Department of Juvenile Justice Counselor Tony Simmons sexually abused troubled teen girls in his care, prosecutors argued.

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Tony Simmons, 47, on the last day of testimony at his rape and sex abuse trial. (DNainfo/John Marshall Mantel)

By **Shayna Jacobs**

DNainfo Reporter/Producer

MANHATTAN SUPREME COURT — A juvenile justice counselor on trial for rape preyed on a child prostitute and other troubled and "damaged" teens because he thought they would not report him, prosecutors charged in summations at his trial Thursday.

The DA argued Tony Simmons, 47, was a friendly, outgoing counselor who was well liked by colleagues and detainees. His cover worked until a supervisor heard about one of his exploits, Assistant District Attorney Evan Krutoy said during closing arguments Friday.

Prosecutors charged Simmons knew the kids and their problems well, having served as a counselor for 16 years.

"He knew they were damaged," Krutoy said. "He's not a man with a gun and a mask and in an alley. [He has] a smile and a [Department of Juvenile Justice] ID card."

But when the predator could, "he did it and he knew it was risky," said Krutoy.

"He rolled the dice one too many times," the ADA added.

Simmons was charged with [sexually abusing two 15-year-olds](#) and one girl who was 16. He allegedly raped one teen on an elevator as she was headed to a court appearance and sexually abused two others in common and locker areas of the Manhattan Family Court building on Lafayette Street, where kids often wait for their hearings.

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The alleged abuse occurred twice in 2005 and once in 2008.

Simmons' attorney, Gregory Watford, argued not one of the girls, all of whom were incarcerated because of criminal activity, could be trusted to tell the truth.

"This case is all about credibility. There's no medical evidence to prove these charges [and] no video evidence," Watford said.

He pointed to what he called inconsistencies in the victims' testimony, including a claim that one of the victim's was shackled and handcuffed while she was allegedly raped on the elevator, which could not be proved.

The defense attorney accused the girls of making up stories so they could get released from custody and try to collect damages from a lawsuit in civil court.

One of the victims, whose name is being withheld, "knew exactly what she was doing — she wanted to get out of there," Watford told the jury .

Simmons has pleaded guilty to these crimes on Sept. 17, 2009 in [exchange for a jail-free sentence](#).

But after criticism from Manhattan DA Cy Vance Jr., who called the judge's offer of 10 months probation to the admitted rapist "an egregious breach of the public trust," the deal was revoked. Manhattan Supreme Court Judge Cassandra Mullen cited Simmons' lack of remorse for raping and molesting the girls "shocking" as the reason.

After the revocation, Simmons turned down a three-year jail deal and opted to fight the charges at trial.

The jury is expected to begin deliberations Thursday afternoon.

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Tony Simmons appeared in Manhattan Supreme Court on Monday, and his jail-free sentence offer was revoked.



By [Shayna Jacobs](#), DNAinfo.com
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