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## **Tearful ex-wife testifies in case of Orange County cop accused of rape, assault**

The ex-wife of a former Huntington Beach police officer accused of 20 felony counts including rape, sodomy and spousal rape took the stand Thursday afternoon as his preliminary hearing began, presenting emotional testimony.

James Roberts III, 34, is charged with alleged acts against his wife, an alleged mistress and another man while serving as an officer with the Police Department. He pleaded not guilty Feb. 26 to rape, forcible sodomy, false imprisonment by violence or deceit, criminal threats, domestic battery, aggravated assault, dissuading a witness and vandalism.

The ex-wife choked back tears as she recalled an alleged incident on Halloween 2007. The two had separated in 2006 and she had filed for divorce earlier in the month, but Roberts came to the Huntington Beach house the two used to live in together, she said.

After a confrontation over her text messaging other people, she tried to escape him by locking herself in the guest room, holding the door handle and using her body to brace the door, she testified.

Roberts allegedly broke open the door, which hit his then-wife in the side of the face, knocking her down, she said. She fled to their son's room, but couldn't get the door closed fast enough, she said. The son wasn't home at the time.

Roberts faces a maximum sentence of 23 years and four months in prison if convicted on all charges.

The preliminary hearing is expected to continue Friday and into next week, prosecutors said. A preliminary hearing is where prosecutors present evidence to a judge who rules if the case is strong enough to go to trial.

Roberts, with his father and sister in the audience, sat at the defendant's table in a gun-metal gray suit and closely cropped hair watching and taking notes as his ex-wife detailed his alleged pattern of violence and repentance for his actions from June 2007 to March 2008.