

It took a Clearfield County about an hour and a half to reach a verdict in the Paul Bloom assault trial.

The one day trial had a slightly delayed start and was specially presided by Senior Judge Kenneth Valasek of Armstrong County.

The first to testify for the prosecution was Dr Jeffrey Rice, the oral maxillofacial surgeon that repaired the victim, John Couturiaux' injuries. Dr. Rice described the injuries which included a depressed cheekbone, orbital and sinus fractures. It was said that the injuries would be very painful for varying amounts of time ranging from months to possibly years.

Clearfield County Jail Warden Krisha Oats was next to testify. She described policy and surveillance video review after such events occur at the jail. A video of the assault was presented to the jury, which shows Bloom moving aggressively toward Couturiaux and then begins punching him over a dozen times in the head and another estimated dozen times to the stomach and rib area. After the first hit, Couturiaux fell to the ground and remained on his hands and knees for the duration of the attack. Once it ends, Couturiaux is seen standing up and putting on one of his shoes that had fallen off.

John Couturiaux was the third to take the stand and described events leading up the the incident as Bloom had been angry that someone had changed the channel on the tv in the room the inmates were in. Couturiaux was among several other inmates and Bloom was accusing of changing the channel. Couturiaux informed the court he was 8 days in on a 14 day sentence and told Paul Bloom that he did not change the channel and was not about to fight about what was on the tv. It was then that the two men exited the common room and the assault occurred. Couturiaux described the pain he felt from the injuries he sustained noting that to this day, when he chews food, his jaw bones scrape together and he can hear a sandpaper grinding sound.

The final prosecution witness, Clearfield Regional Police Sergeant Daniel Podliski told the court of his involvement in the investigation and how the first time he spoke with John Couturiaux after the incident, Couturiaux was unclear as to what happened and several days later he was interviewed again and his recollection was better and his account corroborated what is seen in the jail surveillance footage.

Paul Bloom took the stand in his own defense and at times was hard to understand as he became very emotional on the stand. In summation, Bloom testified that Couturiaux was the aggressor and that he acted in self defense stating, "I knew I was in danger."

There were several issues regarding jury instruction and the verdict slip which caused a several hour delay, however after beginning their deliberations around 6pm, the jury returned slightly after 7:30 with their verdict.

Paul Bloom was found guilty of Misdemeanor Simple Assault and Misdemeanor Recklessly Endangering Another Person. On the two Felony charges, Aggravated Assault, and Assault By Prisoner, Bloom was found not guilty.

Following the verdict, the defense argued for Blooms bail to be reduced, and it was decided that a motion to reduce bail will be heard next Wednesday morning.

Paul Bloom will be sentenced on the two charges he was found guilty of within the next 60 days.