



# Rabbi found guilty of molesting female Army officer

BY JOHN MARZULLI [FOLLOW](#)

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER Thursday, May 5, 2011, 3:12 PM





Rabbi Gavriel Bidany arrives at Brooklyn Federal Court Thursday to learn his fate. (JOE MARINO FOR NEWS)

An orthodox rabbi was convicted Thursday of molesting a female [Israeli Army](#) officer on a trans-Atlantic flight.

[Gavriel Bidany](#) was sitting next to the 23-year-old woman on a Delta jet last month and reached out from under his blanket to fondle her as she slept.

[Magistrate Ramon Reyes](#) said the victim's testimony about the assault was "compelling and wholly believable."

Reyes, who presided over the bench trial in [Brooklyn Federal Court](#), said there was "no question in my mind" about the rabbi's guilt.

Bidany, the married father of 11 children, showed no emotion when the verdict was announced.

The woman, a lieutenant commander of a missile defense unit, declined to comment. The Daily News is withholding her name because she is the victim of a sex crime.

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Sarratt ridiculed Bidany's claim that if there was touching, it happened inadvertently while he slept.

"If these were random reaches of a sleeping man why is it the defendant had such precise accuracy, reaching private areas?" Sarratt said.

The prosecutor also blasted defense lawyer [Saul Bienenfeld](#)'s argument that the victim would have pummeled the defendant with self-defense skills learned in the Army if she was attacked.

"[The victim] acted perfectly and with remarkable poise despite the defendant's repeated violations of her personal space," Sarratt said.

Bidany faces up to six months in prison when he is sentenced next week by Reyes. He is free on \$500,000 bail.

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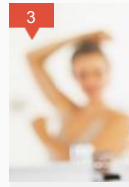
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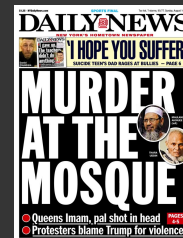
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