

Houston man sentenced to life in prison

A Fort Bend County jury took 15 minutes to decide on a life sentence for a Houston man accused of breaking into a Katy apartment and sexually assaulting one of its tenants.

Joel Briones, 28, received the sentence last Friday, shortly after being convicted of burglary of a habitation with the intent to commit sexual assault.



Joel Briones

During the punishment phase of trial, proof of other sexual offenses by Briones were admitted into evidence, including a prior conviction for aggravated sexual assault that Briones had committed in the same apartment complex.

"We appreciate the jury's dedicated service," said prosecutor Chad Bridges, who specializes in family violence and domestic abuse. "Their hard work has brought justice to this case."

Briones was tried in the 400th District Court before Judge Cliff Vacek. The jury assessed the maximum fine of \$10,000, and this represents the second life sentence received by Briones. Vacek ordered that he must serve one sentence after another.

Because the crimes occurred before the creation of "life without parole" in Texas, the defendant is eligible for parole in the future. But under those same laws, Briones must serve at least 30 years on his first life sentence before he is eligible for parole. Then, if granted parole, he must begin his second life sentence.