

APPELLATE DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, FIRST DEPARTMENT

People v. Macias

2026 NY Slip Op 03396 (Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York First Department 2026) · No. Ind No. 70538/22; Appeal No. 6771; Case No. 2024-00919 · Decided June 2, 2026

SUMMARY

The Appellate Division, First Department modified Christopher Macias's criminal judgment by vacating and dismissing two first-degree rape convictions that were lesser included offenses of predatory sexual assault, while otherwise affirming. The court rejected or declined to review claims concerning duplicity, variance, the Sandoval ruling, and the jury charge. The court held that the remaining rape and criminal sexual act convictions did not violate double jeopardy protections.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Department
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Moulton, J.P.; Kapnick, J.; González, J.; Shulman, J.; Chan, J.
JURISDICTION	New York Appellate Division, First Department
DECIDED	June 2, 2026
DOCKET	Ind No. 70538/22; Appeal No. 6771; Case No. 2024-00919
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed from a judgment of Supreme Court, New York County, rendered after a jury trial, convicting him of two counts of predatory sexual assault, three counts of first-degree rape, and first-degree criminal sexual act, and imposing concurrent sentences. The Appellate Division modified the judgment by vacating and dismissing two first-degree rape convictions and otherwise affirmed.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Unpreserved claims were reviewed, if at all, only in the interest of justice. The Sandoval ruling was reviewed for abuse of discretion. The court reviewed the legal question whether convictions constituted lesser included or inclusory offenses and whether the jury charge, considered as a whole, adequately conveyed the governing law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published New York Appellate Division opinion

PARTIES

Christopher Macias, Defendant-Appellant v. The People of the State of New York, Respondent

TOPICS

criminal procedure

double jeopardy

preservation of error

appellate procedure

evidence

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

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appellate litigation

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the two first-degree rape convictions involving the second victim were lesser included offenses of the predatory sexual assault convictions and therefore had to be vacated and dismissed.
2. Whether the first-degree rape and first-degree criminal sexual act convictions involving the first victim violated double jeopardy protections.
3. Whether the indictment was duplicious because the first victim described two alleged rape incidents and whether the claim was preserved.
4. Whether there was a prejudicial variance between the indictment and the trial proof.
5. Whether the trial court's Sandoval ruling permitting inquiry into the names of three prior convictions was an abuse of discretion.
6. Whether the court's predatory sexual assault charge was erroneous because it omitted the forcible-compulsion element and whether the claim was preserved or rendered harmless by the charge as a whole.

HOLDINGS

1. Because first-degree rape was an element of predatory sexual assault as charged under Penal Law § 130.95(2), the two first-degree rape convictions involving the second victim were lesser included offenses; the convictions were vacated and the corresponding indictment counts were dismissed.
2. The independent convictions for first-degree rape and first-degree criminal sexual act involving the first victim did not violate double jeopardy protections because neither offense was an inclusory offense of the other or of the predatory sexual assault counts under the charged theory.
3. The duplicity claim was unpreserved because defendant did not raise it at trial, and the court declined to review it in the interest of justice. Alternatively, the claim lacked merit because the parties consistently focused the jury on the alleged back-seat conduct and there was no danger of conviction based on the front-seat conduct.
4. The variance claim was unpreserved and was not reviewed in the interest of justice. Alternatively, there was no basis for reversal because the prosecution's theory in the grand jury and at trial was that the rape occurred in the back seat, giving defendant fair notice and creating no variance between the proof and the indictment.

5. The Sandoval ruling was a provident exercise of discretion because the court permitted inquiry into the names of three prior convictions without eliciting underlying facts or identifying them as felonies, and the convictions were relevant to credibility.
6. The claim was unpreserved because defendant did not object to the charge and did not clearly adopt the prosecutor's objection. The court declined interest-of-justice review; alternatively, the charge as a whole adequately conveyed the correct rules because the jury heard four separate times that first-degree rape required forcible compulsion.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Since it was not impossible to commit the greater crime without committing rape or criminal sexual act against the first victim, provided that the jury found that one of those crimes was committed, they did not constitute inclusory offenses.” ([*1])

“To allow an unpreserved claim of dupliciousness to be raised on appeal would open the door to abuse,” ([*2])

“Thus, considering the charge as a whole, having heard the correct instructions four times, the jury would have understood “the correct rules which should be applied in arriving at a decision”” ([*3])

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A jury convicted Christopher Macias of predatory sexual assault, first-degree rape, and first-degree criminal sexual act arising from conduct involving two victims. The indictment charged one first-degree rape against the first victim, whose testimony referred to sexual activity in both the back and front seats of defendant's car, although the parties and the grand jury proceeded on a theory that the charged rape occurred in the back seat. The trial court's charge permitted predatory sexual assault convictions based on either first-degree rape or first-degree criminal sexual act involving the first victim, and the court permitted limited Sandoval inquiry into three prior convictions.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Supreme Court, New York County, convicted defendant after a jury trial and sentenced him to concurrent terms of 18 years to life on each predatory sexual assault count and 15 years on each rape and criminal sexual act count. On appeal, the Appellate Division vacated and dismissed the two first-degree rape convictions charged in counts 3 and 4 because they were lesser included offenses of the predatory sexual assault counts, and otherwise affirmed the judgment.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- People v. Glover, 57 NY2d 61, 63-64 (1982)
- People v. Williams, 14 NY3d 198, 214 (2010), cert denied, 562 US 947 (2010)

- People v. Biggs, 1 NY3d 225, 228-229 (2003)
- United States v. DiFrancesco, 449 US 117, 129 (1980)
- People v. Leung, 272 AD2d 88, 89 (1st Dept 2000)
- People v. Allen, 24 NY3d 441, 448 (2014)
- People v. Becoats, 17 NY3d 643, 651 (2011), cert denied, 566 US 964 (2012)
- People v. Codina, 110 AD3d 401, 410 (1st Dept 2013)
- People v. Jackson, 192 AD3d 486, 487 (1st Dept 2021), lv denied, 37 NY3d 957 (2021)
- People v. Grega, 72 NY2d 489, 496 (1988)
- People v. Medina, 37 AD3d 240, 241 (1st Dept 2007), lv denied, 9 NY3d 847 (2007)
- People v. Smith, 275 AD2d 673, 674 (1st Dept 2000), lv denied, 95 NY2d 969 (2000)
- People v. Hayes, 97 NY2d 203, 207 (2002)
- People v. Bailey, 32 NY3d 70, 79-80 (2018)
- People v. Lombardo, 61 NY2d 97, 104 (1984)
- People v. Drake, 7 NY3d 28, 33-34 (2006)
- People v. Umali, 10 NY3d 417, 426-428 (2008), cert denied, 556 US 1110 (2009)

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

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This decision is uncorrected and subject to revision before publication in the Official Reports. The People of the State of New York, Respondent, v Christopher Macias, Defendant-Appellant. Decided and Entered: June 02, 2026 Ind No. 70538/22|Appeal No. 6771|Case No. 2024-00919| Before: Moulton, J.P., Kapnick, González, Shulman, Chan, JJ. Barkett Epstein Kearon Aldea & Loturco, LLP, Garden City (Kristen Fontaine of counsel), for appellant.

Alvin L. Bragg, Jr., District Attorney, New York (Dana Poole of counsel), for respondent. [*1] Judgment, Supreme Court, New York County (April A. Newbauer, J.), rendered January 29, 2024, convicting defendant, after a jury trial, of predatory sexual assault (two counts), rape in the first degree (three counts), and criminal sexual act in the first degree, and sentencing him to concurrent terms of 18 years to life on each predatory sexual assault count, and 15 years on each rape count and on the criminal sexual act count, unanimously modified, on the law, to the extent of vacating the convictions of two counts of rape in the first degree charged in counts 3 and 4 of the indictment and dismissing those counts, and otherwise affirmed.

Since first-degree rape is an element of predatory sexual assault as charged here (see Penal Law § 130.95[2]), the two counts of first-degree rape against the second victim are lesser included offenses of the predatory sexual assault counts.

Thus, as the People concede, those two convictions of first-degree rape should be vacated and those counts dismissed (see generally, *People v Glover*, 57 NY2d 61, 63-64 [1982]), and there is no need to address whether those convictions violate double jeopardy principles.

However, the first-degree rape and first-degree criminal sexual act against the first victim are not lesser included offenses. Consistent with the statutory language of Penal Law § 130.95(2), the court's instructions permitted the jurors to convict defendant of predatory sexual assault if they found that he committed either first-degree rape or first-degree criminal sexual act against the first victim.

Thus, defendant could have committed predatory sexual assault against the second victim without having raped the first victim if the evidence proved that he committed a criminal sexual act against her, or if the reverse findings were made. Since it was not impossible to commit the greater crime without committing rape or criminal sexual act against the first victim, provided that the jury found that one of those crimes was committed, they did not constitute inclusory offenses.

Defendant's independent convictions of first-degree rape and first-degree criminal sexual act involving the first victim do not violate double jeopardy protections (see *People v Williams*, 14 NY3d 198, 214 [2010], cert denied 562 US 947 [2010]; *People v Biggs*, 1 NY3d 225, 228-229 [2003], see also *United States v DiFrancesco*, 449 US 117, 129 [1980]). Defendant could have committed either of the two lesser crimes without committing predatory sexual assault, and he could have committed the greater crimes without having committed either one or the other of the lesser counts.

In any event, defendant received concurrent sentences, "thereby eliminating any issue of multiple punishments" (*People v Leung*, 272 AD2d 88, 89 [1st Dept 2000]). [*2] Defendant argues that the indictment charging him with a single count of first-degree rape as to the first victim was duplicitous because the first victim's testimony alleged, in addition to the rape in the back seat of defendant's car, a second rape in the front seat.

Defendant did not raise a duplicity claim at trial; thus, his claim is unpreserved (see *People v Allen*, 24 NY3d 441, 448 [2014]), and we decline to review it in the interest of justice. "To allow an unpreserved claim of duplicitousness to be raised on appeal would open the door to abuse," since a defendant could choose to let a duplicitous indictment stand at trial and then, on appeal, "obtain a new trial on the basis of an error they consciously decided not to challenge" (see *People v Becoats*, 17 NY3d 643, 651 [2011], cert denied 566 US 964 [2012]).

As an alternative holding, we find his claim to be unavailing. Although the victim's brief mention, and defendant's more detailed account, of sexual contact in the front seat would have satisfied the statutory definition of "sexual intercourse," both defense counsel and the prosecutor consistently focused the jury's attention on the conduct in the back seat as the basis of the charges.

Thus, there was no danger that a juror would have convicted defendant of raping the first victim based on his conduct in the front seat, and reversal of the rape and predatory sexual assault counts is not warranted (see generally, *People v Codina*, 110 AD3d 401, 410 [1st Dept 2013]). Defendant did not preserve his claim of a variance between the indictment and the trial proof (see *People v Jackson*, 192 AD3d 486, 487 [1st Dept 2021], lv denied 37 NY3d 957 [2021]), and we decline to review his claim in the interest of justice.

As an alternative holding, we find no basis for reversal. The People's theory in the grand jury and at trial was that defendant raped the first victim in the back seat of his car, and the defense proceeded under the same theory.

Accordingly, "defendant was not deprived of fair notice of what the People would attempt to prove" (*People v Grega*, 72 NY2d 489, 496 [1988]). Notably, "there was no variance between the trial evidence and the language of the indictment" (see *People v Medina*, 37 AD3d 240, 241 [1st Dept 2007], lv denied 9 NY3d 847 [2007]).

The court's Sandoval ruling, which permitted inquiry into the names of three prior convictions without eliciting the underlying facts or referring to them as felonies, was a provident exercise of its discretion. Defendant's conviction of burglary, a theft-related offense, was "highly relevant to credibility" (see *People v Smith*, 275 AD2d 673, 674 [1st Dept 2000], lv denied 95 NY2d 969 [2000]).

His New Jersey convictions for resisting arrest and throwing bodily fluids at a law enforcement officer demonstrated his willingness to put his own interests above those of the community (see *People v Hayes*, 97 NY2d 203, 207 [2002]). [*3] Defendant did not object to the court's charge on predatory sexual assault and thus has not preserved his claim. While the prosecutor alerted the court to the omission of the forcible compulsion element as to the aggravating factor of first-degree rape, defendant did not "make clear to the judge that he shared" the objecting party's view (*People v Bailey*, 32 NY3d 70, 79-80 [2018]; see *People v Lombardo*, 61 NY2d 97, 104 [1984]).

We decline to review his claim in the interest of justice. On four separate occasions, the jury heard that first-degree rape required the use of "forcible compulsion." Thus, considering the charge as a whole, having heard the correct instructions four times, the jury would have understood "the correct rules which should be applied in arriving at a decision" (*People v Drake*, 7 NY3d 28, 33-34 [2006]; see *People v Umali*, 10 NY3d 417, 426-428 [2008], cert denied 556 US 1110 [2009]).

THIS CONSTITUTES THE DECISION AND ORDER OF THE SUPREME COURT,
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