

Instruction 2.09
REASONABLE DOUBT

The government has the burden of proving the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. In civil cases, it is only necessary to prove that a fact is more likely true than not, or, in some cases, that its truth is highly probable. In criminal cases such as this one, the government's proof must be more powerful than that. It must be beyond a reasonable doubt. Reasonable doubt, as the name implies, is a doubt based on

reason -- a doubt for which you have a reason based upon the evidence or lack of evidence in the case. If, after careful, honest, and impartial consideration of all the evidence, you cannot say that you are firmly convinced of the defendant's guilt, then you have a reasonable doubt.

Reasonable doubt is the kind of doubt that would cause a reasonable person, after careful and thoughtful reflection, to hesitate to act in the graver or more

important matters in life. However, it is not an imaginary doubt, nor a doubt based on speculation or guesswork; it is a doubt based on reason. The government is not required to prove guilt beyond all doubt, or to a mathematical or scientific certainty. Its burden is to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.