

## 《章莹颖案嫌犯拒认罪》

CHICAGO -- Brendt Christensen, the accused kidnapper of Chinese scholar Zhang Yingying, pleaded not guilty to charges against him on Thursday during his arraignment at a federal court in Midwest US state of Illinois.

The arraignment in federal courthouse in Urbana of Illinois lasted not more than five minutes, and Christensen broke his silence, speaking some time during the proceeding.

As expected, Christensen pleaded not guilty in his third appearance in less than three weeks in US Magistrate Judge Eric Long's crowded courtroom.

In a statement, Christensen's attorney Anthony Bruno said: "he's demanded a jury trial and he plans to persist in his plea of not guilty."

Asked about the worldwide attention the case has received, Bruno said: "bad things happen everywhere. Nowhere else in the US is a person from China more welcome."

Bruno said the case could go on a year or more.

US lawyer Wang Zhidong, who has been offering legal support to the Zhang family on a voluntary basis, said outside the court, "this result is not unexpected and the case enters into another stage."

Christensen's next pretrial hearing was set for 2:45 p.m. on August 28, and his trial date is set for Sept. 12.

FBI officials also say they don't believe that Zhang is alive at this point. Law enforcement agencies are still searching for Zhang's location.

Zhang, a visiting scholar at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), was last seen entering a black Saturn Astra car driven by 28-year-old Brendt Christensen on June 9.

Police arrested Christensen for kidnapping 26-year-old Zhang on June 30, but Zhang's location is still unknown.

The FBI believes Zhang is deceased, based on facts presented in court, court documents and other facts uncovered during the ongoing investigation.

Christensen was indicted on July 12 by a federal grand jury on a criminal charge related to Zhang's abduction. He has been remaining in custody since then.