

Why was Cambridge graduate ever put on trial for sex assault after drunken night of passion?

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The sex trial nightmare of a Cambridge graduate ended yesterday leaving a huge question mark over the decision to charge him.

Jack Gillett was accused of assault by a fellow student after a drunken night of passion.

He has spent nine months under a cloud of suspicion and facing the threat of up to ten years in jail.

But after a three-day trial this week, a jury took just two and a half hours to throw out the £50,000 case.



Cleared: Cambridge University graduate Jack Gillett

Afterwards, Judge Gareth Hawkesworth questioned why it had ever been brought by the Crown Prosecution Service.

"It is a very sad thing that a case like this should come before the court involving two young people struggling to come to terms with the complexities of life and about to start on their careers," he said.

Mr Gillet, 23, a fifth-year physics researcher who supervises other students, hugged relatives outside Cambridge Crown Court and said: "Job done."

Later he added: "It's been a really tough ordeal. I'd like to leave it all behind and get on with my life."

But his family were less charitable. His father, an English teacher, dismissed the case as "a dangerous nonsense".

His mother, a respected artist, expressed "absolute disbelief" that it had gone to court.

His 22-year-old accuser, who remains legally protected by anonymity, had claimed he "continuously" ignored her pleas to stop as he pulled off her clothes in his room at Trinity College

then pinned her to the ground where he groped her and simulated sex.

In his summing up, before the jury of eight women and four men retired to consider their verdict, Judge Hawkesworth said: "This is a story as old as time itself. Boy meets girl. Then the kissing starts.



The accuser: Legally protected anonymity

"There are two irreconcilable accounts and that is all you have to decide.

"Be cautious when taking into account discrepancies in motive. False accusations can be made in revenge. Sometimes they're made for no reason at all. People's fantasies can be boundless."

The jury had heard that Mr Gillett's accuser, the daughter of a well-known personality, had twice left the room on the night of the incident, but returned.

Two students in a nearby room testified that they had not heard her calling for help, even though their door and Mr Gillett's were left ajar throughout the alleged ordeal.

Another student revealed he had shared a bed with the slightly-built blonde on two occasions, weeks before the

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alleged sexual assault.

She later told a friend the man had sexually assaulted her but she never made a formal complaint - even when interviewed about her allegations involving Mr Gillett.

The court heard the woman went to Mr Gillett's room after bumping into him outside the Trinity College bar on the night of June 4 last year.

They began kissing but she said Mr Gillett, who admitted having several pints earlier that evening, became increasingly aggressive and pulled off her clothes.

"I was telling him to stop over and over again. He was pressing down on me quite hard, simulating the sex act," she said.

She claimed he had forced his hand into her pants when he "suddenly seemed to hear me" and agreed to stop.

Mr Gillett insisted it was only at this stage that she asked him to stop, which he said was "absolutely fine" and he did.

A friend of the accuser said last night that she had not wanted Mr Gillett convicted, but just wanted to "give him a scare so he wouldn't do it again".

Mr Gillett's mother Clare last night questioned the 32-year-old law that protects the anonymity of victims of sex attacks, even if the claims are found to be false or malicious.

"My son's reputation has suffered, while she remains anonymous," she said. "If she could have been named maybe she would have held back."

His father, Simon, said the case was a "dangerous nonsense which dragged Jack's name through the mud".

The CPS defended the decision to bring the prosecution.

A spokesman said: "We reviewed the evidence and decided the case should go to court. If the judge had felt the case shouldn't go to the jury then he could have acted at the end of the prosecution case."

A spokesman for Trinity College said that Mr Gillett would keep his position and supervisory role at Cambridge.