

John Henry Sayers lawyer hits out at CPS over rape claims

John Henry Sayers' barrister said prosecutors only charged the hardman with rape to blacken his name and have him remanded in custody

BY ROB KENNEDY

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John Henry Sayers

John Henry Sayers was smeared with false rape allegations in order to take him off the streets for as long as possible, his lawyers have told a court.

The case against the hardman and two women was yesterday officially discontinued during a hearing at Newcastle Crown Court.

Sayers' barrister told the court the conduct of the prosecution had been "lamentable" and said there had never been any chance of a conviction.

Andrew Rutter said Sayers had suffered the stigma of being accused of rape only in order to have him locked up on remand as a category A prisoner for as long as possible.

And he claimed prosecutors only halted the case because he had been released on bail.

Mr Rutter said: "We are dismayed at the conduct of the prosecution throughout these proceedings.

"The decision to charge in August was based on them saying there was a reasonable prospect of conviction. We are now told the same test is being applied and the Crown form the view it no longer passes that test.

"One asks what has changed. The evidence has not changed as far as we know since the decision to charge. One could say the case has got stronger against Mr Sayers, who on September 9 was positively identified by the complainant.

"That begs the question what has changed? The one thing that springs to mind is the bail status of Mr Sayers. The suspicion is this criminal process has been used to incarcerate him for as long as possible, in the knowledge there was no realistic prospect of conviction.

"He has then been passed from category A prison to category A prison to category A prison and the fact of this allegation was plastered all over the local press, with the stigma that attaches to allegations such as these. That leads to the conclusion this was an abuse of the system."

Sayers was granted bail earlier this month after weeks remanded in high security prisons, including Frankland and Wakefield.

He had been refused bail in September when prosecutors said the police were still trying to speak to witnesses.

But Mr Rutter said: "It turned out they were looking for further victims, not evidence to link Mr Sayers to the premises. It led to further incarceration when it was not necessary.

“The conduct of the prosecution throughout has been lamentable and is very much open to question.”

Prosecutors said the complainant had been re-interviewed and after reviewing the evidence, a decision was taken to discontinue the case against Sayers, Sharon Loftus and Ann-Marie Taylor.

The prosecution admitted they then sent two letters to the defendants containing errors, which further complicated matters.

In the first they said the trio should plead not guilty and not guilty verdicts would be entered, but they meant to say the case would be discontinued. The difference is a case can be resurrected without leave from the Court of Appeal when it is only discontinued. A second letter referred in error to proceedings taking place in the magistrates court, rather than the crown court.

In another mistake, no-one from the prosecution turned up at court for a hearing at the end of September.

Robert Adams, for Miss Loftus, said: “It’s a concern the way the case has been conducted.”

Taylor’s barrister said her name had been “dragged through the mud in the city where she lives” on allegations which were without foundation. And he said she had received no explanation or apology for what happened to her.

Sayers always denied conspiracy to rape and three allegations of rape at an address in Byker, Newcastle.

Miss Loftus, 45, of Rochdale Street, Wallsend, and Miss Taylor, 42, of Greencroft Avenue, Daisy Hill, also strenuously denied allegations of conspiracy to rape.

The trio sat in the public gallery at yesterday’s hearing as the case was formally halted.

Sayers has described the allegations as a “character assassination” by police.

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