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## Kebab shop man acquitted of rape after three day trial

A KEBAB shop assistant has been cleared of twice raping a middle-aged woman by a jury at Burnley Crown Court after a three day trial.

Hakan Ekiz, 28, was living in Fountain Street, Barnoldswick at the time of the alleged offences and working at a kebab shop in the town. But he consistently denied the two allegations of rape, saying he couldn't believe it when police turned up to arrest him.

The court had heard that the woman, in her forties, had thought she was going to a party at a house, but arrived to find no other women there and no music playing.

She said she was "more or less ordered" into a bedroom while a group of men argued in another room. Giving evidence, the woman said she was frightened and wanted to leave, but waited in the bedroom with a glass of wine, hoping the argument would stop so she could go and phone a taxi.

But then she said Ekiz came into the bedroom and referred to a sex position in a pornographic magazine.

"I thought he was just being silly," she said. "He had been the perfect gentleman."

But she claimed Ekiz then got undressed, pinned her down and raped her. She said she was "very, very frightened", especially as he had a big German shepherd dog outside the bedroom door. Later, after Ekiz fell asleep, she left the house.

"I was shocked, disgusted, angry, everything," she told the court. "I didn't realise I had been raped until I thought about it afterwards."

But Richard Bennett, defending, said the woman had "ample and abundant opportunities to leave", and hadn't done so because she wanted sex with Ekiz. She had been a willing partner and nothing had happened without her consent, he said.

Asked why she hadn't reported the alleged offences immediately to the police, she replied: "I wish I hadn't bothered contacting the police. I wish I had just let it go - if I had known I had to go through all this. I feel like I have done the crime."

Giving his evidence, Turkish-born Ekiz - also known as Antonio - said he had never been in trouble with the police, either in this country or in Turkey.

He said he had met the woman at a club in Colne. Later they went to her house to pick up some wine, then on to another house. He had told her to go into the bedroom because of the men arguing, and there she drank wine and looked at a pornographic magazine.

Ekiz claimed he had not wanted sex with the woman but that she was "teasing" him. He got undressed, but when she said "no" he said that was alright and that he was going to sleep.

He told the jury he was almost asleep when the woman started touching him, and it was then that they had sex. But he said it was with the woman's consent.

He was woken up later that day when police officers arrived to arrest him.

The jury took less than an hour to acquit him unanimously on both counts, and he was discharged.

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