

The Telegraph

My life is blighted, says rugby blue acquitted of rape

By Caroline Davies

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A CAMBRIDGE University rugby blue cleared yesterday of raping a drunken teacher at a party said that his future had been "blighted" by the accusation.

Nicholas Buoy, 24, a former Millfield schoolboy, walked free after a jury at Cambridge Crown Court took four hours to clear him of raping and indecently assaulting the 28-year-old woman at a housewarming party last September.

His mother clung to his father and sobbed in the public gallery as the verdict was announced. John and Jan Buoy, both teachers from Hatfield, Hertfordshire, had been present throughout their son's three-day trial.

Mr Buoy, who was studying for a post-graduate physical education teaching certificate at Hughes Hall, remained impassive. He had been accused of raping the teacher, who has a young child, as she lay on a bed in a drunken stupor at the party held by undergraduates at nearby Homerton College.

The jury heard that she had drunk a glass of wine, four bottles of a drink called Vodka Source, two or three glasses of vodka and orange and several glasses of a cocktail made from white wine, vodka and cranberry juice. The woman wept as she told the jury that she felt that the incident was "her fault" because she was so drunk.

Mr Buoy, who had drunk between 10 and 12 pints of lager as well as cranberry cocktails, told the court that he was so drunk that he could not remember whether he had had sex with the woman or not. In a written statement as he left the court, he said: "I am obviously relieved that the nightmare of the past 12 months is over. The strain upon me and my family has been enormous.

"This is not an occasion for celebration because I realise, as should everyone, that there are no winners in a case such as this. I appreciate that my accuser has also suffered during these proceedings. The nature and detail of this case is extremely personal and now widely publicised.

"Both my accuser and I will have to live with this for years. My future has been blighted by this case." He thanked his mother and father, "who stood shoulder to shoulder in support of me", and asked for time "to rebuild my life".

Jason Coulter, his solicitor, said there was "genuine public concern" about a law that allowed his client to be identified and the accuser to remain anonymous. "Here is a young man of impeccable background who has been through the mill for the past 12 months and now has to start again." Mr Coulter said that many people would think "there was no smoke without fire. That is the downside of the law as it stands."

Mr Buoy went up to Cambridge after graduating from Brunel University. Throughout his school days and university time he showed outstanding sporting talent. He played for Saracens under-eights and stayed with the north London club until he was 21. He played cricket for Middlesex under-19s and was also a talented footballer, playing for Watford under-15s, where he was offered a contract.

Mark Copely, master in charge of rugby at the Leys school, Cambridge, where Mr Buoy did teaching practise as a PE teacher, said: "I have known him for just under a year and he is a conscientious individual who always does his best. He always behaves in a highly professional manner. He not only proved to be an excellent mentor, he also gave a lot to the less confident members of the group."

Anthony Lemons, director of physical education at Cambridge, described him as "exemplary". He said: "He is a quiet unassuming man, extremely sociable. Given his personality and general popularity he is one of the least likely students to become involved in such allegations. He is a non-aggressive individual."

Denis and Christine Driscoll, whose son Paul is a close friend of Mr Buoy, said that they knew Mr Buoy as "honest, trustworthy". The court had heard that Mr Buoy had not met the woman before that night. She was so drunk that she could barely stand.

One of the witnesses, Hamish Innes, from Australia, told the court that the woman was the "centre of attention". He said: "Her shirt was very loosely buttoned, if buttoned at all. She was teasing the boys, giggling and being flirtatious."

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