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Morris rape charge dropped

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Morris: charges dropped ()

A rape charge against Leeds United footballer Jody Morris was dropped today.

The case against his co-defendant Kristofer Dickie, charged with rape, was also dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service today.

The case was discontinued after new forensic evidence came to light.

Neil Franklin, the Chief Crown Prosecutor in West Yorkshire, said: "At all times the CPS has to be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of obtaining a conviction and, whilst this could be asserted on the basis of the evidence submitted in the initial file, this is no longer the case.

"The thorough police inquiry which began following the allegation being made and which has continued since the arrests, led to a request from West Yorkshire Police for further work by the Forensic Science Service.

"It has now completed this work and, as a result, submitted further evidence which undermines the prosecution case to the extent that there is no longer a realistic prospect of obtaining a conviction.

"When the CPS received the file in November, it was reviewed by a senior and experienced CPS lawyer who was satisfied at that stage that there was a realistic prospect of conviction.

"As a result, Jody Morris and Kristofer Dickie were charged.

"West Yorkshire Police are also confident this was the correct decision at the time.

"The CPS has a duty to keep cases under review and when fresh evidence comes to light, as it has here, we have to look at the case and decide whether it can still go ahead.

"Having looked at this further evidence, we have decided the case should not proceed.

"This decision has only been made after very careful consideration and following lengthy consultation with the West Yorkshire Police and Queen's Counsel.

"The content of the prosecution case remains confidential."

The woman alleged she was attacked in a lay-by on the A58 between Leeds and Wetherby, a quarter of a mile from Collingham, in the early hours of October 7.

She has not withdrawn her rape allegation following the emergence of the new forensic evidence.

Morris, 25, and Dickie were said to have been for a night out with friends in Leeds before the attack was alleged to have happened.

On October 8, Morris was arrested at Leeds' Thorp Arch training ground and questioned for 30 hours before being bailed by police.

On November 18 he and Dickie were called back to Chapeltown police station and charged.

Fellow Leeds player Jermaine Pennant, 20, a midfielder on loan from Arsenal, also spoke to police but was never charged.

Morris has been on bail since he last appeared before Leeds magistrates' court on December 17.

His long-term friend Dickie, 26, from Fulham, south west London, has also been on bail.

Dickie's father is a detective chief inspector in the Flying Squad who investigated Jane Andrews, the Duchess of York's dresser, over the death of her boyfriend.

Morris, a former England under-21 player who earns around £30,000 a week, and Dickie had been due to appear at Leeds Crown Court for a plea and directions hearing on March 10.

After his initial arrest Morris, a midfielder, was suspended by Leeds United but later returned to training.

The rape charge was the latest high profile incident in Morris's controversial career.

He was involved in a drinking session at Heathrow airport with a number of former Chelsea team-mates within hours of the September 11 tragedy, angering fellow passengers.

Then, in August 2002, the diminutive player was cleared of affray after a trial at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court in London.

It followed a fracas outside a nightclub.

In the same trial his then Chelsea team-mate John Terry was cleared of glassing a nightclub bouncer.

Morris was born in Fulham, London, and signed for Chelsea in 1995 after graduating through their youth system.

In April 2002 he was part of the Chelsea side which reached the quarter-finals of the Champions League before being knocked out by Barcelona.

He was released by Chelsea in July last year after scoring five goals in 124 Premiership appearances, and joined Leeds United where he was booked on his debut.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/morris-rape-charge-dropped-7236304.html>