

Curry House owner cleared of raping 'sleeping woman'

AN INDIAN restaurant owner cleared of raping a woman as she slept in his car said yesterday the case should never have gone to trial.

BY **GETREADING**

00:00, 26 MAR 2003 **UPDATED** 01:10, 8 JUN 2013

AN INDIAN restaurant owner cleared of raping a woman as she slept in his car said yesterday the case should never have gone to trial.

Resam Lama's claim came after a jury at Reading Crown Court unanimously acquitted the businessman of rape after deliberating for less than two hours.

It was a wait that Mr Lama, 34, says left him feeling like a prisoner, but a verdict that finally marks the end of one of the worst years of his life.

The owner of The Curry House restaurant in Oxford Road said: "The prosecution case was a shambles - it was transparent, littered with holes and riddled with lies.

"Until the moment the verdict came in it was like: 'I know the truth but do these people [the jury] know the truth?'

"Even though I knew I was going to be found not guilty you can imagine how I felt."

The court heard Mr Lama, of Berkeley Avenue, consistently denied rape from the moment police knocked on his door and never once changed his story.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, alleged Mr Lama offered her a lift home after a late night drinking session in December 2001 and pounced as she slept.

She claimed he then offered her cash to keep quiet.

But police could find no evidence that the pair had sex in his car and internal swabs from the woman, taken within a day of the alleged incident, found only her boyfriend's semen - although Mr Lama's semen was found on the inside crotch area of her trousers.

Mr Lama told police and the jury she had asked to go to his house after drinking together and then tried to seduce him as he watched TV. He said the pair had been intimate at his home but never had penetrative sex and a jury of six men and six women, who delivered their verdict yesterday afternoon, agreed.

However, days after the alleged incident Mr Lama was arrested. He said his shock and embarrassment turned to anger when the woman duped £275 from him by promising to get the case dropped.

"I was really scared they would take more and more, take advantage of me", Mr Lama told the jury.

He reported the incident to the police who said in court the woman never spoke to them about dropping the allegation.

<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/local-news/curry-house-owner-cleared-raping-4271757>