

## Hotel porter cleared over rape claim

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A hotel night porter from Wolverhampton has been cleared of rape and sexual assault after a jury decided a teenage mother had lied about him attacking her.

Charles Mukendu, aged 34, of Holloway Street, Stow Heath, was found not guilty of raping the 18-year-old at the Premier Inn in the city centre on August 9 last year.

As the jury returned its decision yesterday afternoon, Mr Mukendu and his family dropped to their knees in court before calling out their thanks to members of the jury.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard earlier how the drunken teenager lured Mr Mukendu into having sexual intercourse with her in exchange for money which she needed to get a taxi home. She then told police he had raped her.

Summing up the case, Mrs Justice Dobbs said: "From the time she entered Premier Inn she was flirting with him and making sexual advances."

Mr Stefan Kolodynski, defending, said: "Once she had made the allegation it set off a juggernaut of a lie that took on a life of its own."

The teenager was drunk when she arrived at the hotel with three friends in the early hours of the morning.

"After attempting to sneak into one room, Mr Mukendu, who was on duty, told the group they would have to be quiet and pay for an extra room," the court heard.

CCTV footage shows two of the group, including the woman who claimed to have been raped and sexually assaulted, kissing and hugging Mukendu to thank him for allowing them to stay in the hotel.

Mukendu told the jury: "She said she would offer me £10 for sex. I told her I did not have any money. She started kissing me but I resisted."

"I took her up to the room to make sure she didn't disturb any guests. She hugged me and then I got carried away."

Lord Justice Dobbs added: "The woman told Mr Mukendu another man she was with had raped her and she wanted to go home.

"When he asked her, she said she had no money and he suggested she spend the night in one of the rooms her friends had paid for. He says he took her upstairs to the room and on the way up, she started kissing him and began rubbing his groin.

"She said she would sleep with him for £10 and use the money to get home to her daughter.

"He says he was overcome emotionally and knew it was wrong."

Mukendu maintains he would have known if the woman was not consenting.

The woman claimed she went down to reception to call a taxi when Mr Mukendu led her upstairs to an empty room and forced himself on her.

Ms Heidi Kubik, prosecuting, said: "She was a young girl who had been drinking and was foolish and naive."

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