

University student cleared of rape

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John Medhane, 29, who came to Cardiff from his home in Eritrea to study biochemistry, had always maintained sex with the woman in his kitchen had been consensual.

He said it was the woman who initiated it and she had “encouraged” him to the point where he didn’t want to say no.

But she reported him to the police when her friend walked in and caught them in the act.

Yesterday, a jury which had retired to consider verdicts in the case at the end of last week, returned to Cardiff Crown Court to unanimously clear him of two charges.

A local woman, aged 37, had accused him of forcing himself on her after she and a friend agreed to go back to his rented accommodation in Maerdy Street at 3am on March 14 last year.

She and the other woman had been trying to get a taxi home when the student and his friend started talking to them.

The accuser, who cannot by law be identified, said they walked along with the two men and then were told they were near Mr Medhane’s house and were invited inside for a cup of tea.

She alleged she was in the kitchen drinking her tea and had already kissed him voluntarily when he suddenly grabbed her, pinned her against a worktop, and pulled down her clothing.

The student, who gave evidence through an interpreter, said that wasn’t true.

He said the woman not only kissed him first but had touched him and performed a sex act on him before agreeing to have intercourse.

He said she may have then cried rape through embarrassment because her friend, who had fallen asleep in the living room, woke and discovered them in the act.

When arrested, he told police the woman looked “wrinkly” and old enough to be his mother and said he had not found her attractive.

“But she encouraged me to have sex,” he said.

“I’m not blaming her but I agreed because of the circumstances.”

Mr Medhane, who said he had a girlfriend he visited on weekends, told jurors: “At that moment [in the kitchen] the reason for having sex with her would have been less than the desire to have it.”

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/university-student-cleared-of-rape-1928301>