

## My relief- by man cleared of rape



David Pudsey, 53, has been cleared of rape

13:2611:28 Thursday 24 September 2015

**A lorry driver falsely accused of rape and sexual assault has spoken of his 21 months of hell after finally being cleared of all charges by a jury.**

Married father-of-four David Pudsey, 53, said he had lost faith in the police and the social services who had deprived him of seeing some family members since Christmas Eve 2013 on the evidence of one woman.

Mr Pudsey, 53, who has lost two stones in weight, admitted the allegations could have broken a lesser man.

He was speaking on the steps of Hull Crown Court after being cleared of 12 allegations of sexual assault following a five-day trial at Hull Crown Court.

Mr Pudsey said: "I have lost my faith in the police service for not investigating this properly. They took the word of one complainant, without checking basic things like where I was.

"It nearly broke me. I was forced to move out of my house and have not been able to live with my wife for 21 months. My family and work colleagues have stood by me because they knew I would not be capable of such a thing. Those at work knew I was away driving.

"I have never forced myself on anyone in my life. I would rather have a good dinner than have sex to be honest with you."

Mr Pudsey's wife and children gave character evidence that they believed their husband and father could and had never done such a thing.

Mrs Pudsey, of Hutton Cranswick, told the court: "I never had any concerns about my husband's behaviour." She admitted she was there when the initial complaint was made on 22 December 2013 by a woman who had allegedly drunk five pints came to their house at 2am.

Mrs Pudsey said: "I said it was appalling and a terrible allegation to make. I was disgusted that she could say something about such a fantastic man." She said others had lied to the court.

Defence barrister Paul Genney said: "I will be throwing you out after Christmas." He said the year before she had attempted suicide with pills and alcohol in a cry for help.

Mr Pudsey took the witness stand and told the jury he suspected the initial complaint came as a result of the woman's drunken row with her girlfriend, but once out, she could not go back, and it had turned into a quest for compensation to ease debt.

"I did not expect it to get this far because I thought the police would find out it was not true," said Mr Pudsey. "They didn't do their job properly. These offences didn't happen. I know I have never done anything. I have nothing to hide. I know one day we will all be judged up there."

He said he was in absolute shock when the woman came to his house to confront him, but realised she was in drink and did not make sense. He said he had taken her home in his car and asked her what had brought it all on and if there was something wrong, but she changed the subject.

When asked to explain why the woman would make it up in court he said: "There is a financial motive. She is in debt. I don't think it was when it started. I think initially (it started) as she had been drinking, and a lot of barracking went on, because of a stormy relationship."

He said it had continued after police statements were made. "The can started rolling. She thought let's keep kicking it."

Defence barrister Paul Genney said the complainant and her partner had presented inconsistent evidence about the amount of alcohol consumed before making the allegations. He said the allegations were not reported for years, to anyone, and then only in a row.

Mr Pudsey said despite his nightmare he was a Christian man who would not bear malice towards the complainant as it would do no good. However, he called for a law reform to protect men in his situation.

He said suspects in sexual offences cases should be granted anonymity until conviction to prevent vigilante reprisals on people who are innocent.

He said: "This has changed me. But I would not let it beat me. I will put it behind me. But there is no denying there have been hard moments."

Mr Pudsey walked free from court into the arms of his family who stood by him attending court every day.

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