

# The Shuttle

## News

10th January 2008

### Kennelman cleared of rape



**A HUNT kennelman, formerly of Kidderminster, broke down in tears today as a jury cleared him of raping a woman after taking her on a night out.**

Robert Chiplin, 23, former kennelman with the Cotswold Hunt, leaned forward with his head in his hands and sobbed as the jury foreman announced the not guilty verdict at Gloucester crown court.

He was comforted by two court ushers before he left the dock after being discharged and granted a defendant's costs order by Judge David Smith QC.

During a three-day trial, the petite woman, now 20, had told how she once had drunken sex with Mr Chiplin at a hunt ball, two days after they had first met but she said that from then on they were friends rather than sexual partners and she had gone back to his flat at the Cotswold Hunt kennels several times and slept on his bed

without any sex being involved.

She claimed, however, that, on October 28, 2006 she was lying on his bed, wearing just her pants and one of his t-shirts after a night out and he started to kiss and fondle her. He then began to have intercourse with her against her will, she alleged.

Mr Chiplin, who recently lived at Hurcott, Kidderminster, before being bailed to live with his parents in Taunton, said the woman consented to sex and he had not forced himself on her.

After a retirement of just over an hour the jury acquitted him of rape.

The jury had been told he and the 4ft 10in tall woman met when she was working in a pub in the Cheltenham area in October, 2006.

Prosecutor Lynne Matthews said he took her to a hunt ball a couple of days later and they ended up getting drunk and having sex in a marquee.

However, said Ms Matthews, they went on to be friends rather than intimate with each other and regarded the sexual encounter at the Ball as a "drunken mistake".

At the time of the alleged rape, the prosecutor said, the woman was starting a relationship with another man but remained friendly with Mr Chiplin.

On the night of October 28 they went drinking in Cheltenham and then to a night club before returning to Mr Chiplin's home, she said.

Chiplin got into bed naked after they had shared a pizza and she put on one of his t-shirts, as she usually did when she stayed with him.

According to the woman, Mr Chiplin then began to rape her and she was crying because she could not move.

She alleged it was only when she became particularly upset that he stopped. He then left the house for a smoke outside.

The woman said that when Mr Chiplin returned he was apologetic but refused to give her a lift home, saying he had been drinking and his car was faulty.

She then dressed and set off on foot to walk home but, after calling her sister on her mobile phone, she was picked up by her mother.

When arrested, Mr Chiplin said that after they had both got into his bed he kissed her and she responded and they went on to have consensual sex.

However, after about 30 seconds she said 'I can't do this' and he immediately stopped, he stated. He said she did not seem in any distress when she left.

In evidence today, Mr Chiplin said he had told the woman many times that he fancied her but she was not willing to have a relationship with him because she disapproved of hunting.

He said, however, that they had sex not only at the hunt ball but later the same night when they got back to his flat.

He agreed that on other occasions when she stayed in his bed there had been no sexual contact between them.

But he said that on the night of the alleged offence she had persuaded him to go out clubbing with her in Cheltenham and had promised him the "greatest" sex he had ever had if he took her out.

Once they had got into bed they were lying face to face and then began to kiss before he initiated foreplay, he told the court.

He said the woman relaxed and lay on her back and he began to have intercourse with her but after about a minute she said she could not carry on doing it and he desisted, he said.

He told the jury he was "miffed" but not unduly upset about her stopping and he assumed it was because she had recently begun a relationship with a new boyfriend.

Mr Chiplin agreed that he refused to give the woman a lift home as she had asked.

He told the jury that was because he had to get up early for work the next morning and, in any case, his vehicle had a faulty fan belt.

<https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/1957695.kennelman-cleared-of-rape/>