

Tears of relief for spinal surgeon after being cleared of rape due to accuser's 'embellishments'

Matthew Sewell had the world at his feet with a first class degree and a dream job but this was left in tatters after allegations on which a court ruled 'no sensible person' would convict

BY David Huntley Multi-Media Journalist

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Matthew Sewell

A spinal surgeon who had to resign from his hard-earned profession due to serious rape allegations shed tears of relief in court after being cleared.

Matthew Sewell was cleared of two counts of rape at Teesside Crown Court on Tuesday after a judge found there was no lawful case to answer.

The 40-year-old cried in the dock after the charge was withdrawn and he was formally found not guilty.

Judge Stephen Ashurst told the jury that both counts would be withdrawn after "carefully considering" the "elements" of the charges.

Some jury members had also "raised questions of inconsistencies" during the trial.

Judge Ashurst told the court that "embellishments" in the accuser's evidence was a major factor for scrapping the proceedings.

He said that he was "satisfied that there is no evidence to prove essential elements" of the two counts due to "sheer improbability".

Judge Ashurst added that no "sensible person could surely convict" on the evidence provided.

After withdrawing the case, the elected foreman of the jury was then asked to formally enter a not guilty verdict.

Mr Sewell was working at James Cook University Hospital, in Middlesbrough when he was accused of the crimes by a fifth year medical student.

He denied the allegations, which dated back to 2017.

During the trial, the court heard that the woman later admitted to police that she had "embellished" part of her initial account.

Tania Griffiths QC, defending Mr Sewell, raised questions about the Crown Prosecution Service and the lengthy delay in the case after its withdrawal.

She said that "exactly three years ago" Mr Sewell had the "world at his feet" after gaining a first class honours degree and starting a job he'd always dreamed of.

But the subsequent police investigation halted his career and Mr Sewell was forced to resign.

He has been unable to work as a surgeon for the past three years.

"One minute he was saving a child, the next he is in court", Ms Griffiths said.

She added that Mr Sewell's DBS should be "cleared" in order for him to resume working.