

Spotsy rape charge dropped

Posted: Tuesday, May 5, 2009 12:35 am

The rape charge against a Spotsylvania County man was dropped yesterday afternoon.

Authorities had charged Richard Byies, 34, with the rape of a 21-year-old woman he'd met at a hotel bar March 21.

But yesterday, prosecutor Tom Shaia said he decided to drop the charges because they would have been difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt.

He said that decision was made only after conferring with the accuser and her parents.

Byies attorney, Stuart Sullivan, said evidence had come to light since his client was charged that showed innocence.

The evidence "cast grave doubt on their version of events," he said.

Sullivan said he felt police were quick to charge Byies after the incident, without all of the facts being known.

At the time, Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office 1st Sgt. Liz Scott said Byies was charged after a woman called police to say she had been raped by a man she had met earlier in the night at Mugsy's bar in the Spotsylvania Ramada Inn.

Scott said Byies had been reportedly buying drinks for the woman throughout the night and had offered to take her home.

Her friends declined the invitation and then took her upstairs to the hotel room where she was staying, Scott said.

The friends left the room and came back about an hour later to find the woman missing.

Security guards then went to look for her and shined a flashlight into Byies' truck where they saw the girl reportedly struggling, Scott said.

Byies then drove off and was charged later that night.

Ellen Biltz: 540/374-5424

ebiltz@freelancestar.com