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Dominique Strauss-Kahn case: DA Cy Vance Jr. does right thing in a no-win situation



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Tuesday, August 23rd 2011, 4:00 AM



Jefferson Siegel for News

Many were outraged by DA Cy Vance Jr.'s decision to request dismissal of charges against Dominique Strauss-Kahn, but it was the right call, writes Joanna Molloy.

Cy Vance Jr. was damned if he did and damned if he didn't.

Feminists will decry the Manhattan district attorney's request to dismiss charges that Dominique Strauss-Kahn sexually assaulted maid Nafissatou Diallo.

Some will say it's about race and class. After all, he was the white head of the International Monetary Fund, and she is a black woman who earns her living scrubbing toilets.

And, of course, the French, who might have elected Strauss-Kahn president, will howl that his life was ruined for naught.

The reality is Vance did what he had to do - both at the beginning and the end of this case.

On May 14, cops were told that Strauss-Kahn, one of the world's most powerful men, had attacked the hotel maid and was on a plane scheduled to fly to France.

Cops pulled him off the Air France jet. What were they supposed to do, let him fly back to France, which does not have an extradition treaty with the U.S.?

That would have meant there would be no way to force him to come back to face charges, as happened with Roman Polanski, who skipped out on sex charges in 1978 and has never set foot in this country again.

The case against Strauss-Kahn

Did prosecutors make the right decision to drop the sexual assault case against Dominique Strauss-Kahn?

Yes, the maid is obviously a sketchy witness. No, Strauss-Kahn seems to have done something inappropriate in that room. I'm not sure. VOTE

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Vance had the forensics to arrest Strauss-Kahn - there was evidence of semen. He had medical confirmation of bruising.

He had the victim, who seemed believable and credible, and there was a man with very deep pockets sitting in first class on an Air France jet on the JFK tarmac.

If the plane took off with Strauss-Kahn aboard, the media would be ranting.

No, Vance and the cops did what they had to do.

But then the case went south like a rocket - and it got worse every day as prosecutors caught Diallo in lie after lie after lie.

Diallo told prosecutors she had no idea Strauss-Kahn was wealthy. The day after the encounter at the Sofitel, she was recorded talking with a prisoner who told her Strauss-Kahn was rich. "I know," she replied. "I'm getting a lawyer."

Diallo told emergency room doctors that day that she was not injured. A month later, "she suddenly had a shoulder injury," a source told the Daily News.

There was redness on her genitals, but she neglected to tell doctors she had had sex the night before.

Diallo said she had no outside income; then bank records surfaced showing someone deposited \$60,000 into her account.

Diallo said she'd been gang-raped in her home country of Guinea - then recanted.

"Prosecutors couldn't ask a jury to believe her, when they didn't," the source said. "She changed her story so many times.

"Nobody expects victims to be perfect. The DA's office has worked with victims who are prostitutes, with victims who were drug users. Just be honest about it. She lied to the people whose jobs revolve around figuring out who's telling the truth."

Immigration expert Andrew Johnson told The News that if Diallo had simply lied on her asylum application, Vance could have limited the damage by noting Diallo "had no money, spoke little English and was vulnerable to immigration scammers ...

"As for all the other inconsistencies in her story, well, she has horrible credibility problems."

Other women have claimed Strauss-Kahn is a predator, the worst kind of wolf. If so, it's too bad, because Diallo turned out to be the woman who cried wolf too many times.

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