

Bury Times

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Police "gag" grieving Dad

A GRIEVING Bury father claims he's been "gagged" by police from talking about his dead son to millions of TV viewers.

And the makers of BBC's popular Kilroy programme say they've been forced to ditch an interview with Mr Dennis Proudfoot after coming under pressure from detectives and Bury's Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Proudfoot (45), was due to appear on TV yesterday (February 27) to discuss the case of his son, Dennis Jnr.

The 21-year-old committed suicide in December, two days after being charged with the rape of an 18-year-old girl.

Following the tragedy, the father received a handwritten note from the alleged victim, claiming his son was innocent and pledging to help clear his name.

However, this week a spokeswoman for the independent company which makes Kilroy claimed police and lawyers demanded Mr Proudfoot should not appear because the case was sub-judice.

Mr Proudfoot, of Fairfield Drive, Bury, said: "The thing is, if I had appeared on TV I would only have mentioned everything that happened up until I received the letter.

"But the police said no. I would only have answered the questions the interviewer asked me."

The father said angrily: "I've been stopped from talking about the death of my own son.

"To talk about what happened helps. In one breath the police say the case against my son is closed and in the next they say I can't talk about it - I feel I've been gagged."

Mr Proudfoot claimed when he initially received the letter, saying his son was innocent, detectives said he could do what he liked with it. "I think it's very wrong a father can be told what he can and cannot say regarding his own son."

He felt police and CPS lawyers had tried to prevent his appearance because they didn't want the case to receive such "high profile", national exposure.

"My son might not mean a lot to them. But he means a lot to me. I'm still trying to clear his name. A man is innocent until he's proved guilty.

"Dennis never went to court, so in the eyes of the law he was still innocent."

Mr Proudfoot and the TV company claim that police said the case was to be heard next Monday.

"But it's only a preliminary hearing," said the father. Two other men have already appeared before Bury Magistrates charged with rape.

A spokeswoman for Kilroy said the programme was to highlight people who had been falsely accused of crimes.

She added: "Because of all the hassle we received in relation to Mr Proudfoot's appearance we decided it wasn't worth it. It was going to be too hot to handle."

Det Ch Insp Tony Simister, head of Bury CID, said: "It would have been completely irresponsible for Mr Proudfoot to have appeared on this TV programme to discuss any aspects of the police case when two people are waiting to attend court charged with rape and because of proceedings in relation to the inquest."

Converted for the new archive on 14 July 2000. Some images and formatting may have been lost in the conversion.

http://www.burytimes.co.uk/news/6185623.Police__gag__grieving_Dad/