Nigerian junior athlete accused of rape in America gets freedom, cries out

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Nigerian junior athlete, Emmanuel Ineh Ortisemeyiwa, was a promising athlete with potential to be a world champion in the long jump, but his life and athletics career took a tragic turn after he was accused of rape in Alabama, United States.  
  
  
  
However, Oritsemeyiwa, who grabbed a long jump silver medal at the 2018 Junior Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina, said he was framed and has duly been acquitted by the Grand Jury of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. The athlete was also cleared of complicity in a wire fraud, which he was roped in with two other Nigerian athletes and a Zimbabwean.  
  
  
  
The 23-years-old athlete is back home trying to dust himself up and resuscitate his career. “I asked to be deported because I didn’t want to stay in America any more after all I’ve been through,” Oritsemeyiwa told mainlandmetronews.com.ng  
  
“I was married to an American citizen, and I was given relief during my removal proceedings, but I elected to come back home voluntarily, because of my mental health.”  
  
  
  
Narrating his story, Oritsemeyiwa said: “There was this girl I had consensual sex with on our first date. As a student athlete, it was hard to resist girls who practically threw themselves at you.  
  
“She became really clingy, so, I told her I didn’t want a relationship. I ended all ties with her.  
  
  
  
“A year and eight months later, I got married and she came asking why I got married; if it was because of papers or if I actually loved my wife? I then told her that I don’t talk about my life with people.  
  
  
  
“She got very irritated. The next day, I went to my apartment complex housing station to hangout. She was already there waiting. I didn’t touch her, yet she accused me of rape.  
  
  
  
“Luckily for me, the security cameras showed we weren’t in close contact. The rape kit came out negative. The medical examination done on her on the day of the so-called rape showed she didn’t have any bruises, tears or scratches. No evidence of force.  
  
  
  
“The case got dismissed because there was no substantial evidence to even formally charge me, let alone indicting me. I was trying to take back my plea, but the FBI were trying to be dirty, so, they started digging for things that weren’t there in the rape case and tried to paint me bad in the eyes of the judge so that she wouldn’t let me take back my plea.”  
  
  
  
On wire fraud allegations, he said: “It was the Feds who were looking for all things to incriminate me. Sending money in and out of a country is not a crime. The fraud had already been committed before the money came into my account but because of these other people’s involvement, they roped me with them: Same for another Zimbabwean on the case. We both got probation.”  
  
  
  
On his detention, Oritsemeyiwa said: “I spent six months in Tuscaloosa County jail in Alabama until the rape case got dismissed. Then I got transferred to Hattiesburg Mississippi for the federal case.  
  
  
  
“I lost everything, so, I couldn’t come out of jail because I didn’t have anywhere to go. I opted to re  
  
main in detention because had lost my property and wife.”  
  
  
  
The athlete explained how the wire case resolved saying: “I got probation in the wire fraud case because I was the least culpable. I didn’t have any idea of what was going on. I went to the United States on February 19, 2020. The investigation started from 2016 to 2020 June.  
  
  
  
“So, there’s no way I could have known. I was told by my own friend that I was selling cars; not knowing I was sending money back home on behalf of people who defrauded other people here in the USA.  
  
  
  
“I was lied to and the whole money was in the millions, but I was held accountable for $15,000 dollars. I got probation on it because the judge admitted that she knew I was used by the fraudsters. She didn’t let prosecutors give me a misdemeanor sentence.  
  
  
  
On steps he is taking to clear his name, the athlete said: “I’m thinking of reopening the money laundering case. But for now, I want to clear my name of the rape case because it has tarnished my image and defamed my character.  
  
  
  
“I was wrongfully convicted with a felony. At worst, I should get a misdemeanor, but they were heartless. In the rape case I was wrongly accused and even the jurors came to the decision that they have no case against me.  
  
  
  
“If there was a case, they would have tried me for all counts. They had no case and knew they had messed up because they had my face on national TV.“I’m very keen to clear my name and continue athletics. I can’t talk to coaches or leave to join clubs in Europe because of this bad image.  
  
  
  
“I’m just 23 years of age. I haven’t lived my life to its fullest. I just need my life back. I was supposed to graduate before my scholarship got taken because of the case. And I was going to do my master’s as well, but it all ended due to this issue.  
  
  
  
“There was a lot of misinformation in the media that I had been imprisoned. I wasn’t imprisoned in any way. I got probation on the federal case because the judge was just wise enough to see I was a victim of circumstances and didn’t commit crime. Like I said earlier, the rape case got thrown out because there was no evidence against me.”