

Relieved:
Dominique
Strauss-Kahn
yesterday

Freed DSK tells of 'my nightmare'

As case is dropped, he says: I want to go home

From **Tom Leonard** and **Daniel Bates** in New York

JEERS from angry hecklers were not enough to diminish Dominique Strauss-Kahn's relief as he walked free from a New York court yesterday.

More than three months after a hotel maid made shocking claims that the former International Monetary Fund chief had tried to rape her, a judge dismissed the sexual assault charges against him.

Prosecutors had requested the charges were dropped, admitting they could not ask a jury to believe Nafissatou Diallo's version of events when they did not believe it themselves.

As he left Manhattan's state supreme court with wife Anne Sinclair, Mr Strauss-Kahn finally broke his silence about his ordeal.

The 62-year-old said: 'These past two and a half months have been a nightmare for me and my family.'

He thanked those who had believed in his innocence, adding that he was 'most deeply grateful to my wife and family who have gone through

'Resuming something of a normal life'

this ordeal with me'. He said: 'We look forward to returning to our home and resuming something of a more normal life.'

Later, as he arrived back at the town house where he lived for weeks under house arrest, he added in French: 'I'm relieved. I will speak more soon. It has been a nightmare. I want to go home.'

When he returns to France, Mr Strauss-Kahn will be welcomed by calls from fellow socialists for him to resurrect a potential run for presidency next year.

But his reputation may be permanently damaged by the revelations of his womanising made in the international media over the last few weeks.

And he still faces an investigation into claims of attempted rape from 32-year-old writer Tristane Banon.

The lawyers for Guinean immigrant Miss Diallo also say they will now pursue a civil case against the man known as DSK.

Although prosecutors said they uncovered a string of lies that the 32-year-old hotel maid had told about her past and her behaviour after the alleged attack, her supporters claim that does not mean she invented her alleged ordeal in Mr Strauss-Kahn's suite. As the French-



Accuser: Nafissatou Diallo



Anger: Some 30 protesters awaited Strauss-Kahn's release

man left the court, a noisy group of some 30 protesters greeted his six-vehicle motorcade with chants of 'DSK, shame on you' and waved placards bearing slogans such as 'DSK treats women like property' and 'All rape victims deserve a fair trial'.

But prosecutors told the court that the serious credibility issues surrounding Miss Diallo meant they could not prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt.

They argued that DNA evidence showed sexual contact - but not necessarily a forced encounter - between the guest and the maid, prompting them to decree that the medical evidence was inconclusive.

Newly released court papers revealed that Miss Diallo 'dropped to the floor and physically rolled around weeping' after prosecutors confronted her with evidence of her apparent lies. She later explained that she 'wasn't under oath' when she told them.

The prosecution said she lied to them 'on matters great and small', including her claim to having been gang-raped by soldiers in Guinea.

Had the case gone ahead, defence lawyers had been expected to argue that Mr Strauss-Kahn had consensual sex with the maid.

Ben Brafman, Mr Strauss-Kahn's lawyer, reinforced that message after yesterday's hearing.

He said: 'This was not a forcible encounter. You can engage in inappropriate behaviour, perhaps, but it is not criminal.'

William Taylor, another lawyer acting for Mr Strauss-Kahn, added: 'It's a little difficult to be overjoyed about this situation.'

'Ninety days ago I had to visit Dominique Strauss-Kahn in Rikers Island [prison] in an orange jumpsuit.'

'What a turnaround. What a remark-

able change in the life of a criminal case. What a tragedy for Dominique Strauss-Kahn.'

Mr Brafman said it was difficult for outsiders to 'grasp the full measure' of his client's 'relief', adding that Mr Strauss-Kahn would stay in New York in the short term.

It's good to talk? Not for the boys

MEN'S reluctance to discuss their problems can be infuriating for their chattier wives and girlfriends.

And the habit, it seems, starts in childhood.

A study claims that most men, rather than being too inhibited to share their feelings, simply do not see the point of airing their woes.

According to researchers, while girls believe talking endlessly about their problems will make them feel better, boys think it is a waste of time and say the strategy is 'weird'.

The U.S. team said the opposing attitudes are likely to explain the stand-offs that occur in later relationships.

Dr Amanda Rose, of the University of Missouri, carried out four studies involving nearly 2,000 children and teenagers.

She said: 'For years, popular psychologists have insisted that boys and men would like to talk about their problems

By **Fiona MacRae**
Science Correspondent

but are held back by fears of embarrassment or appearing weak.

'However, when we asked young people how talking about their problems would make them feel, boys didn't express angst or distress about discussing problems any more than girls.

'Instead, boys' responses suggest that they just don't see talking about problems to be a particularly useful activity.'

Dr Rose said the findings could also help explain why men and women have very different attitudes to dealing with relationship problems.

She said: 'Women may really push their partners to share pent-up worries and concerns because they hold expectations that talking makes people feel better.'

'But their partners may just not be interested and expect that other coping

mechanisms will make them feel better. Men may be more likely to think talking about problems will make the problems feel bigger, and engaging in different activities will take their minds off of the problem.'

In a previous study, Dr Rose showed that constant rehashing of problems made girls, but not boys, more prone to anxiety and depression.

She said: 'This is especially true for problems that girls can't control, such as whether a particular girl likes them, or whether they get invited to a party that all the popular kids are attending.'

Dr Rose, who reported her results in the journal Child Development, said parents could learn from the findings by encouraging boys to realise that sometimes it is good to talk.

On the other hand, girls should be discouraged from dwelling excessively on problems.

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