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Police report says MU's Dixon accused of rape but not charged

By TEREZ A. PAYLOR

COLUMBIA -- Missouri senior guard Michael Dixon Jr. was accused of forcible rape on Aug. 20 but was not charged after a Columbia police investigation, according to a police report obtained by The Star.

According to the report, the case was closed Nov. 16 after Tracy Gonzalez of the Boone County Prosecuting Attorney's Office ruled there was insufficient evidence to file charges.

"Based on (the police) review ... it was determined that the evidence was not sufficient to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury," Gonzalez told The Star. "That's how all of our cases are handled, and this wasn't treated any different than any other investigation that comes through our office.

"If additional evidence were presented, we could always review (the case) in its entirety and make a charge at that point as well, which is why I can't get into specifics of the case. But it was a thorough investigation."

Dixon has been suspended from the Tigers' basketball team since October for what coach Frank Haith has called a violation of team rules. A spokesperson for the Missouri basketball team did not return a message from The Star asking for comment.

While Dixon isn't facing criminal charges, he could still face disciplinary action from the University of Missouri.

Over the weekend, a series of Twitter messages were posted by a person claiming to be a woman who was sexually assaulted by Dixon. The messages have since been deleted.

The first message was in response to a Twitter post by former MU player Kim English, who wrote after MU's 81-64 loss to Louisville on Friday night that Dixon should be playing and that the "student board" that supposedly had taken action against him was a "joke."

The woman then responded: "The student board is not a 'joke.' it wasn't students it was adults. Dixon is a rapist and I know this because im the victim."

She later wrote: "I dont care if you or anyone in the school doesnt believe me. Please do no ever say he did nothing wrong. because he did," and then this: "Yes, I said it. Michael Dixon sexually assaulted me. That's why he is suspended. You call can call me names, but I know what he did."

A message was also posted to Dixon's Twitter account that night, which read: "Our team fought hard. I wish I could b out there helping them. I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG!"

The "student board" the messages referred to is the University of Missouri's Student Conduct Committee, which is made up of faculty members, not students, and decides cases in accordance with MU's standards of conduct in student disciplinary matters.

In such cases, a student who is expelled, dismissed or suspended from the university by the committee because of conduct violations can appeal to the chancellor, who has the authority to overturn the decision. While the appeal is being considered, the chancellor may then allow the student to continue in school. Dixon has been allowed to practice and travel with the team during his suspension.

Mary Jo Banken, the executive director of the MU News Bureau, declined comment when asked whether the allegation was related to Dixon's suspension, citing The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

MISSOURIAN

Missouri guard Michael Dixon Jr. accused of sexual assault

COLUMBIA — Missouri senior guard Michael Dixon Jr. was accused of sexual assault Aug. 20, according to a report by the Kansas City Star.

Dixon has been suspended from the basketball team since October.

The case was closed Nov. 16 because the Boone County Prosecuting Attorney's Office said there was insufficient evidence to charge Dixon.

Boone County Assistant Prosecutor Tracy Gonzalez said Tuesday evening that she made the decision not to pursue charges against Dixon. She said that after a thorough investigation by the Columbia Police Department, there was not enough evidence to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

Gonzalez would not go in to the specifics of the evidence.

The allegations of sexual assault first came to light on Twitter early Saturday after a woman tweeted she was sexually assaulted by Dixon, in response to former Missouri player Kim English's tweets questioning Dixon's suspension from the basketball team.

English's tweet, which has been removed, said "The Univ of Missouri 'student board' is a joke. Acting and making a decision without having actual facts. University should be ashamed!".

He later tweeted, "Michael has handled this situation w/ nothing but poise, class and professionalism. Would be awesome if his University would do the same."

A later post read, "Thank God we have an AMAZING chancellor who I trust will make the right decision soon. And do what's right by reinstating Michael Dixon Jr."

English currently plays for the Detroit Pistons.

The woman responded with a tweet saying, "Yes, I said it. Michael Dixon sexually assaulted me. That's why he is suspended. You can call me names, but I know what he did."

Her tweets were removed shortly afterward.

The student board English mentioned is MU's Student Conduct Committee. The committee is composed of MU faculty members; it decides cases using MU's Standard of Conduct.

If the committee removes Dixon from the university, the M-Book says Dixon can appeal the ruling through MU Chancellor Brady Deaton or someone he designates to determine the appeal. The decision made in the appeal is final, unless "it is to remand the matter for further proceedings," according to the M-Book.

A student going through the appeals process can stay in school until a decision is made according to the M-Book, MU's guide to student conduct.

Dixon has been practicing and traveling with the team.

Missouri coach Frank Haith has declined to comment on Dixon's suspension throughout the season, stating originally that it was because of a violation of team policy.

Calls to Dave Reiter, director of strategic communications for the Missouri men's basketball team, were not returned Tuesday evening.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Details on Mizzou's Dixon are out

7 hours ago • By Vahe Gregorian vgregorian@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8199

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Mizzou senior guard Michael Dixon was accused of rape in August, but the case was closed Nov. 16 after an investigation led Tracy Gonzalez of the Boone County prosecuting attorney's office to conclude there was insufficient evidence to file criminal charges, according to a Columbia police report obtained by the Post-Dispatch.

Dixon, who was never interviewed by police or charged, has been suspended from the MU basketball team since at least early October for what coach Frank Haith has repeatedly called violations of team rules.

His future remains unclear, and MU officials declined to comment Tuesday night.

Dixon is still attending classes at Mizzou and last week traveled with the team for a tournament in the Bahamas.

While MU was there, it became public knowledge that Dixon's continued suspension had been administered by the MU Student Conduct Committee after a string of Twitter postings by former Tiger Kim English.

"The Univ of Missouri's 'student board' is a joke," he wrote in part in reference to Dixon's status. "Acting and making a decision without actual facts. University should be ashamed!"

English, now with the Detroit Pistons of the NBA, later added: "Thank God we have an AMAZING chancellor who I trust will make the right decision soon. And do what's right by reinstating Michael Dixon Jr."

All of which prompted several tweets in response from a woman who wrote, "The student board is not 'a joke.' ... Dixon is a rapist and I know this because im the victim."

The woman who posted those tweets -- and soon shut down her account -- is the same woman who made the accusation in August, the Post-Dispatch has confirmed.

While English's tweets suggested the committee, made up of seven faculty members, had already made a ruling on Dixon, any such verdict is not public knowledge.

Per the University of Missouri System Rules of Procedures in Student Conduct Matters, the committee can impose sanctions that include a warning, probation, temporary dismissal or “university expulsion” – “permanent separation of the student from the University.”

If the committee has, in fact, made a ruling, Dixon has, as suggested by English, the right of appeal to Chancellor Brady Deaton.

The chancellor’s charge, according to MU’s student conduct rules and regulations, would be to “review the record of the case and the appeal documents and (he or she) may affirm, reverse, or remand the case for further proceedings and shall notify each party in writing of the decision on the appeal. The action of the Chancellor shall be final unless it is to remand the matter for further proceedings.”

Deaton has been out of the country and won’t be back until later this week.

The closed police report is likely to be part of the information that will be before him to review and almost certainly would contain information the committee wouldn’t have had to work with before it made its apparent ruling.

The police report reflects several interviews with the alleged victim and also interviews with her roommates, the result of which evidently led the prosecutor’s office to believe interviewing Dixon was not necessary to reach the conclusion to close the matter.

After a terrific junior season in which he averaged 13.5 points off the bench to earn him such accolades as “sixth man” of the year in the Big 12, Dixon figured to be a significant cog in MU’s inaugural season in the Southeastern Conference.

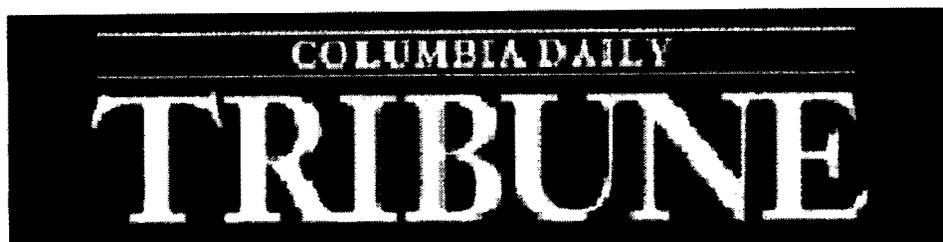
Along with junior Phil Pressey, Dixon was one of just two players returning from a Tigers team that went 30-5 last season.

The 15th-ranked Tigers are 5-1 entering their next game Saturday against Appalachian State at Mizzou Arena.

Dixon has been unavailable to comment since his suspension, though occasionally he has expressed himself on Twitter – including blurting out Friday that he had done nothing wrong before the post was taken down.

Last Wednesday, the 6-foot-1 guard from Lee’s Summit, Mo., tweeted: “I was thankful for representing my STATE everytime I touched a basketball floor. Thanks.”

Just how long that will remain in past tense remains to be seen.



No charges filed after Dixon accused of rape

Missouri senior guard Mike Dixon was accused of forcible rape on Aug. 20, according to a Columbia Police Department offense report, but it was determined there was insufficient evidence to file criminal charges.

Dixon is currently serving an indefinite suspension from the MU basketball team for reasons that have only been described as a violation of team rules.

According to the narrative of the police's offense report, an MU sophomore met with Officer Skyler Williamson and told him she had been raped at about 12:15 a.m. on Aug. 20.

She said she invited Dixon to her apartment to get to know him better. She said he suggested they turn out the lights because his "eyes hurt" and that, after initially resisting, she agreed to turn off the lights and they went to her bed. She said that while she tried to talk to Dixon, he leaned in to kiss her and she kissed him back. She said Dixon got on top of her and "she told Dixon she did not want to do this but that she just wanted to kiss him."

According to the report, she said Dixon told her to "chill out" and began tugging at her pajama pants. She said she told Dixon multiple times to stop, to which he responded, "just chill out." She said she tried unsuccessfully to push Dixon off of her but couldn't. She said she told Dixon, "No, you don't even have protection, this is disgusting," and that after saying that, Dixon removed a condom from his pocket and put it on.

She said that soon afterward Dixon penetrated her with his penis and she was in pain and unable to move. She said Dixon asked her to turn around so he could penetrate her from behind, which she did. When asked by the investigating officer if she ever tried to stop Dixon, she said "she had just let it happen and she did not know why." She said she was not afraid of being struck by Dixon.

According to the report, the woman said Dixon stopped after about 20 minutes and she reached for her pajama pants. She said that when Dixon asked why she was trying to put on her pants, she replied, "because this was never supposed to happen in the first place." She said she went to the bathroom and when she returned Dixon asked her to perform oral sex on him. She said she told him no, and then Dixon asked her to masturbate him, which she did. She stated "she didn't know why she did." She said Dixon left soon thereafter.

According to the report, the investigating officer asked if she had gone to the hospital to have a sexual assault kit done, and she said she had not but would do so. The officer collected evidence, including the pajama pants, a shirt she was wearing, bed sheets and a red rag he used to clean himself up after he ejaculated.

She went to University Hospital later that night to have a sexual assault kit done, and police collected it as evidence on Aug. 21.

A follow-up report detailed the woman's second interview with the Columbia Police Department, this time with Sgt. Steven McCormack on Aug. 21. The explanation of the alleged rape was similar, although it stated that Dixon only arrived at her apartment at approximately 12:40 a.m. on Aug. 20.

The explanation also included more details. She said she and Dixon met at a fraternity party in March and had tried to date the previous semester. She said that Dixon would try to visit her late at night to have sex but that she would say no.

She said that after the alleged rape she yelled at him, "telling him that basketball athletes are all alike, and they like to have sex with all the girls." She said after the alleged rape she walked Dixon to the door and opened it for him. She said she and Dixon had not spoke since it happened but that she sent him a text message approximately two minutes after he left her apartment.

According to the report: "The text she sent said they should hang out together, and was sorry for yelling at him. She also told Mr. Dixon she didn't want him just using her for sex. Mr. Dixon sent her a text back, saying Okay." The woman "told Mr. Dixon to send her a text when he was free. Mr. Dixon sent her a text back, saying Okay."

When asked why she didn't initially report the offense, she said she "didn't want to go through the Rape Kit and Police Reports." She "also had concerns about seeing Mr. Dixon on campus, and said he is a really good athlete in basketball. She also said people worship Mr. Dixon, they wouldn't take her seriously, and the school wouldn't take it seriously." She said she decided to report the alleged rape on the advice of her sisters.

The woman said she threw away the condom Dixon used, but the police recovered it from a trash bin outside her apartment.

The woman, in response to a message from McCormack, left McCormack a voicemail message on Aug. 22 that she wanted to prosecute. A follow-up report states that the woman and McCormack tried to cold call Dixon on Aug. 24 but did not reach him. There is no evidence in the offense report or follow-up reports that police ever interviewed Dixon.

A later follow-up report stated that the woman tried to contact Dixon via text message on Aug. 27 but he did not respond. The next day, she told police she sent him another text message and told him he was ignoring her and called him an "asshole."

In more follow-up interviews with McCormack, the woman shared text-message exchanges with Dixon she had after the alleged rape. Included was the following exchange from Sept. 4:

Woman: "Just delete my number. Dont want anything to do with you."

Dixon: "I'm sorry its not you I told you that I don't have any problems with u I have just had to rethink my priorities and do what's best for me."

Woman: "Michael, what kind of person has sex with someone then doesn't want to contact them afterwards. I barely text you. I didn't even want to have sex with you in the beginning; i pretty much made that clear with you since last semester, but no Michael always gets What he wanta."

Woman: "I told you before I cut those damn lights off we weren't going to have sex. I had no intentions of doing that with you. Because I don't have sex with guys I barely know. You only wanted to come over that night for one sex anyways. I just wasn't going to let you. But now you weren't taking no for an answer. So that is why I'm mad at you. Because you used me."

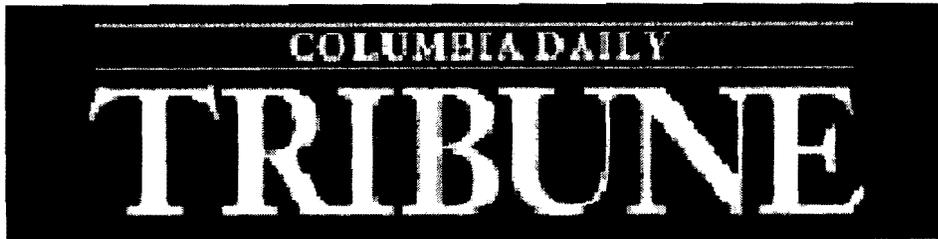
Woman: "And the fact that you don't have the decency to respond to how I feel. I'm assuming you don't care which is fine. I just know I was right about you all along."

Dixon didn't respond to the last three messages.

In the final follow-up police report on Nov. 16, McCormack listed under follow-up remarks: "insufficient evidence to file criminal charges."

Tracy Gonzalez of the Boone County Prosecuting Attorney's Office told The Kansas City Star that "it was determined that the evidence was not sufficient to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury."

Sources have told the Tribune that the university's Student Conduct Committee met weeks ago on a matter involving Dixon. Per university policy, if the committee votes to suspend or expel a student, the student can appeal to the chancellor.



UM Press panel discusses new ideas

Now that the University of Missouri Press is back up and running, members of a faculty advisory committee want to know how the publishing house should evolve to stay relevant.

The main decision is whether the press should continue to publish niche titles in areas such as American literature and history, military and political science, and regional subjects. That's what the UM Press has built its reputation on for some 54 years, Editor-in-Chief Clair Willcox told the 21-member committee yesterday.

But some in the group worry the focus is too narrow and leaves out UM System professors who might otherwise want to publish at the local press.

"The focal areas are not relevant for a majority number of our faculty," said Rebecca Johnson, an associate professor in nursing and veterinary science.

The committee met for the second time yesterday. It was formed to help the press move forward after UM System President Tim Wolfe reversed his May decision to shut down the operation.

After members got briefed on what the press now does, some questioned how to get more UM faculty members to submit manuscripts.

MU graduate students who have books prefer to send them to other institutions because they believe doing so looks better on a résumé, said Susan Flader, an MU professor emeritus of history.

"Students are more resistant to publishing with the University of Missouri Press," she said. "They think it will go further if it's printed elsewhere, even if the title is suited for the" UM Press.

At the same time, Flader said she "never felt anyone looked down at me because I published with the" UM Press.

Still, some are concerned that faculty members also think it looks more prestigious to have external presses publish their works. One concern is that those on committees awarding tenure might think a professor received preferential treatment if he submitted his manuscript to his own institution's press.

To combat that, committee member Gary Kremer, executive director of the Missouri State Historical Society, suggested outsiders should be included on the editorial board. Right now, the board — which reviews and selects books for publication — is made up of 11 faculty members from the four UM campuses.

Bringing in others from outside of the system might make the board seem more prestigious, Kremer said.

Willcox brushed off the notion, saying that's just "window dressing." Having an all-faculty group ensures that the editorial board has a stake in the press's future, he said. "They know the stakes and take it seriously."

Willcox was open to publishing more books from UM System authors, saying he's receptive to ideas.

One suggestion the committee seemed to agree on was to consider a new book series about scholarly publishing. That's a niche few, if any, presses now have a series about, and it's a topic MU already has experience in. From 2003 to 2007, MU Libraries hosted a series of forums and conferences about new types of scholarly communications, and Provost Brian Foster envisions MU hosting an international conference on the topic, possibly next school year.

As a prelude to that conference, Dean Mills, dean of the MU School of Journalism, suggested the university invite researchers to submit scholarly papers.

And that, Willcox said, "might lead to full-blown books."

Previously unidentified bug discovered nibbling wort on MU campus

A unique species of aphid is found right under researcher's nose, on the MU campus.

By **MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS**

On the gridiron and hardwood sidelines, Truman the Tiger has the University of Missouri mascot gig wrapped up.

But in the halls of science, a new critter is getting the buzz — a tiny insect discovered on the Columbia campus.

Aphis mizzou.

The bug, a member of the aphid family, has been officially written up as a newly identified organism in the October issue of *Zootaxa*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

The bug was first spotted feeding on St. John's wort by a retired MU researcher.

The researcher, Ben Puttler, has been working with the College of Agriculture Food and Natural Resources to figure out how wasps could be used to control crop pests. But in the spring of 2005, Puttler put his wasp research on hold to take a closer look at the itty-bitty black bug — the size of a granule of pepper — that he'd found nursing on tender young leaves of St. John's wort.

While it could be a bit of an irritant crawling on human skin, the bug doesn't bite humans, Puttler said, and is not easily seen unless a bunch of them clump together in a colony.

Tests by Doris Lagos, a University of Illinois entomologist, determined that the bug had never been discovered before.

"I haven't looked all over the world or even all over the state," Puttler said. "But as far as we know, the only place this aphid is found is on the Mizzou campus."

MISSOURIAN

Columbia College, Mizzou Alumni Association participate in 'Giving Tuesday'

Tuesday, November 27, 2012 | 5:06 p.m. CST
BY Olivia Hancock

COLUMBIA — Columbia College and the Mizzou Alumni Association are among those looking into a new way to promote charity this holiday season: Giving Tuesday.

New this year nationally, Giving Tuesday is a kind of altruistic extension of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, encouraging consumers to give rather than get. The basic concept is to promote donating to organizations and charities instead of shopping for bargain-priced items.

The Mizzou Alumni Association and Columbia College were promoting their involvement through social media on Tuesday.

Ry Colman, coordinator of e-engagement at the Mizzou Alumni Association, said Giving Tuesday is an opportunity to educate people on what the association does to give back to the MU community.

"Often, people don't realize that what we do here at the alumni association goes beyond membership," he said.

Donations made through Giving Tuesday to the Mizzou Alumni Association can be made in three ways: becoming a member, donating to the Mizzou Traditions Fund, or participating in the Mizzou License Plate Program.

Colman said that when people donate to the association, "it's really them giving back to Mizzou as a whole." He said the association is the largest on-campus contributor to student scholarships and sponsors MU traditions like Homecoming and Tiger Walk.

Consumers can also choose how they want to donate to Columbia College: contributions will go toward funding scholarships and the college's online campus, among other things.

Michael Kateman, executive director of development for the college, said the school was interested in participating because Giving Tuesday is a way to remember the giving spirit of the holidays.

"It seems like a great way to end your shopping binge from Black Friday and Cyber Monday," he said.

Kateman said that charities aren't always the first thing on people's minds after the shopping weekend, and Giving Tuesday serves as a reminder.

"It allows people to remember those causes that are near and dear to their hearts," he said.

According to Giving Tuesday's website, the idea for the movement developed at the 92nd Street Y in New York. An extensive number of corporations and nonprofit organizations, such as Microsoft and Special Olympics, have signed on as partners of the movement.

Both the alumni association and Columbia College are listed as partners with the national program and, along with Heart of Missouri United Way, are the only ones from Columbia.

This is the first year Giving Tuesday was put into practice, so its impact remains to be seen.

"Hopefully next year it will be a known thing, and it can grow from there," Colman said.