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Rape charge case settles

■ **Ex-student** was falsely accused in 2009 assault

■ **Settlement terms** not disclosed by attorneys

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A former Hofstra University student has agreed to settle a federal lawsuit against a woman who falsely accused him and four other men of raping her in a dormitory bathroom in 2009, attorneys in the case said yesterday.

The lawyers for Rondell Bedward, 24, of the Bronx, and the accuser, Dannel Ndonge, 21, of Washington Heights, would not discuss the terms of the settlement.

The case, which was heard by U.S. District Judge Leonard Welexer, ended yesterday morning, minutes before Ndonge was to take the stand.

In addition to Ndonge, Bedward had initially sued Nassau County, the Nassau district attorney's office and the Nassau County Police Department for \$70 million, saying that those agencies violated his civil and constitutional rights when they arrested him on first-degree rape charges in September 2009.

Last week, he withdrew claims against those agencies, all of which had denied any wrongdoing, attorneys said.

None of the other men have filed civil lawsuits in the case. Asked in court last week whether he had raped Ndonge, Bedward told his lawyer, "That never happened, ma'am." Still, he said he regretted the incident, during which four of his friends had sexual encounters with Ndonge and he videotaped them with his cellphone.

"If was a situation we all put ourselves in, and a situation I still regret 1,000 percent," Bedward said in court. He declined to comment through his lawyer, Valerie Cartright, of Hempstead, after the settlement yesterday, and Cartright said only that it was resolved to their "mutual satisfaction."

"We're glad this saga is finally over," said Ndonge's law-



PHOTO BY JAMES CARBONE

■ **Rondell Bedward** was falsely accused of raping a Hofstra University student in 2009.

■ **Stephen Jackson**, of Manhattan, Ndonge declined to comment.

■ **Nassau County Attorney John Ciampoli** said the county was vindicated. He said it was clear that police had probable cause to arrest the men, and the district attorney acted responsibly in investigating, then dismissing the case. Referring to the video, he said, "I think it's fair to say that the plaintiff was not going to appear sympathetic to any jury."

■ **Bedward** and three of his friends, none of whom attended Hofstra, Kevin Taveras, 20, of Brentwood, Stahn Felipe, 19, and Jesus L. Ortiz, 19, both of the Bronx, were arrested after Ndonge told police that one of them had snatched her cellphone to lure her into a Hofstra dorm, then all of them had tied her up and raped her in a bathroom stall.

■ **A fifth man** authorities said was involved was never arrested.

■ **Prosecutors** said Ndonge recanted after learning of the videotape.

■ **Nassau District Attorney Kathleen Rice** agreed not to prosecute Ndonge if she admitted she lied, got psychological help, and did 250 hours of community service, prosecutors said at the time.