

The damaging impact of false rape allegations

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A false rape allegation is not a victimless crime. In fact, there are two distinct victims – the innocent party and all the real rape victims out there.

18 July 2012 By [Neil Monnery](#).



The scales of justice on top of the Old Bailey, London. Photo credit: James Cridland, <http://flic.kr/p/8AqBAj>

There are very few things everyone reading this piece will agree on. One of those things will be that rape is one of the most disgusting (if not the most disgusting) crimes that any human being can perpetrate. However is someone claiming rape when in fact no crime has taken place just as bad?

When thinking about what I should write for my first piece on **The Periscope Post** I threw out the idea of writing about this subject to a couple of friends and to say the response was cold would understate exactly what they said. However it is something that has been growing (or at least the reporting of it has been growing) in recent years.

Last week a 27 year-old woman from Aberbargoed, Caerphilly in South Wales was jailed for two years and eight months for making up a rape claim. She claimed rape because she was late home from a night of partying and thought that her parents would shout at

her unless she had a good reason. So instead of apologising for staying out longer than she planned to she decided to cry rape.

Luckily for the two men arrested this girl cracked quite quickly and admitted that she lied in just her second interview with police. There will always be those who won't believe that the accused didn't commit the crime though. Mud sticks and a rape allegation carries a stigma.

Two months ago 20-year-old Hannah Bryon made up a rape allegation in an attempt to win back an ex-boyfriend. The student told her ex of the alleged attack and then claimed that the story snowballed out of control. Yet again the police arrested a man who was detained and subject to all the usual DNA probing. When nothing untoward was found he was let go. Byron didn't even get sent to jail; she received a 12-month suspended prison sentence and 150 hours of community service.

A quick Google search brings up many stories that are similar to the two above. I remember several years ago of a man who was remanded in custody for nine months of accusations of rape only for evidence to come out that he had never even met the victim. It was two years after he was released that the interview was conducted and he couldn't hold down a job and had been suffering from depression since his arrest.

Quoting from a story written on the **thisisessex** website we see exactly why false allegations of rape are a serious crime: "The 18-year-old victim was kept in custody for 16 hours and intimate medical samples were taken. The couple's false claim unravelled when a witness and CCTV backed up his account. However, as a result of the allegation the victim lost his accommodation, his job and the trust of his family."

So, someone lost their accommodation, their job and the trust of his family and the two people that falsely accused him got just a nine-month sentence. That seems pretty pathetic to me.

In another case, the defence team said that the defendant used the false rape allegation as a cry for help and that a prison sentence would leave her unable to look after her daughter so therefore she should be spared jail. The judge disagreed and Jessica Day of Corringham, Essex, was jailed for two years in 2008.

I could give you many more examples. These cases are starting to become more commonplace but the sentencing is all over the shop. In September last year, Rebecca Howard from Deal in Kent got a four month sentence suspended for two years and ordered to carry out 200 hours of community service. It was the same crime as Jessica Day yet the sentence was wildly different.

Considering what a disgusting act rape is to falsely accuse someone of such an act is reprehensible. It makes real rape victims think more than twice about coming forward. I often wonder how these people who make false allegations sleep at night or how they

feel when they read about real rapes in the newspapers or watch reconstructions on Crimewatch. Do they not realise what they are a) putting an innocent person through and b) doing to real rape victims?

This is what Judge Stephen Hopkins QC told Emma Jones in the summing up: “Every false allegation of rape increases the plight of those women who are genuinely victims of rape. It makes their allegations harder to prove as juries are concerned at the possibility of convicting an innocent man. When a rape allegation is made it’s often very difficult to prove but also very difficult to refute and those accused can suffer from the stigma attached.”

Hopkins is spot on. A false rape allegation is not a victimless crime. In fact, there are two distinct victims – the innocent party and all the real rape victims out there. I think there should be a new crime that specifically targets false rape allegations. Not the type where a jury doesn’t convict but ones where it is found out it was completely made up. It should be punishable by a serious sentence not suspended jail sentences.

Are false allegations of rape just as bad as rape itself? The answer to that is undoubtedly no, but it does have severe ramifications. A false rape allegation can easily wreck a life and when it is done by someone with no mental issues for reasons such as not wanting to get shouted at by their parents or to try and win back an ex partner then people should face real consequences.

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