

'Woman's lies cost me 20 years of my life but she got off lightly'

[ROB PARSONS](#)

Tuesday 4 January 2011 11:14

A father of three says he has lost two decades of his life after being falsely accused of sexually abusing a 14-year-old girl.

Ian Henderson served 16 months in jail alongside sex offenders at Wandsworth prison after being convicted of indecent assault in 1990.

The former coach driver, 47, is in line for substantial compensation after his alleged victim, Carrie Crownshaw, confessed to making up the accusations, 20 years after her evidence saw him jailed.

Mr Henderson, from Stanmore, says his wrongful conviction is the main reason why he has not worked since 2002. In recent years, many jobs would have been closed to him because of the need for a Criminal Records Bureau check that allows access to children and vulnerable adults.

He said: "Every time I try to start getting on my feet I get kicked off again because of what happened. The ghosts keep reappearing. All I have done for the last 20 years is survive. I haven't done the things I would have liked to do, such as buying a house.

"To be taken away at 27, that is the prime of your life, when things start happening like getting married and having children. All that has been taken away, I can't replace it."

Mr Henderson was cleared at the Court of Appeal last month after Crownshaw, 34, confessed to police that the abuse accusations were untrue.

She had alleged that an indecent assault was carried out by Mr Henderson, who had been in a relationship with her mother, in December 1989.

Crownshaw confessed after a therapist urged her to "come forward" because it was "important to the counselling process". She was prosecuted for perverting the course of justice, and admitted the charge in May, receiving a suspended sentence.

Mr Henderson feels she got off lightly. He said: "This could have been done years ago. Even if it had been done 10 years ago it would have reduced the harm."

Mr Henderson, who has been married and had two children since leaving prison, is now in a new relationship and has a young son. However, he says he rarely goes out because of the stigma he suffered.

His barrister, Gareth Underhill, told his appeal hearing that he would be in line for a substantial damages pay-out as the victim of a clear miscarriage of justice.

Mr Underhill added: "He spent 20 years with the stigma hanging over him for an offence which was based on an entirely false allegation. It has blighted his life in terms of employment prospects and relationships."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/woman-s-lies-cost-me-20-years-of-my-life-but-she-got-off-lightly-6551523.html>