

BBC personality made 40 false rape allegations against her ex-boyfriend whose life remains blighted by her lies

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A BBC personality has shattered her ex-boyfriend's life by falsely accusing him of rape.

The woman, who has broadcast to television audiences of millions, accused him of raping her 40 times throughout their two-and-a-half-year relationship.

He was arrested, held in a police cell and handcuffed as police searched his flat for evidence of his crime. But she retracted her allegation weeks later, and the officer investigating the claims described them as 'inconsistent' and 'not credible'.

Despite the lack of evidence, the incident remains on the Police National Computer thanks to a legal loophole, which campaigners say is blighting the lives of falsely accused men.

Even if the 'victim' withdraws their allegation, it will show up under enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks that are undertaken regularly on people who apply for jobs with employers such as the NHS or schools. It will also prevent



'Robert' says his life has been shattered despite being cleared of any allegations

them from travelling to the United States.

The boyfriend cannot be identified to protect his accuser's anonymity, but wants to make his case public.

He said: 'The lies she told have ruined my life. Yet, while I have lost out on jobs and been left paranoid and scared of women, she has got away without punishment. We're not even allowed to reveal her identity. Rape is a horrific crime, and there is no way I am capable of committing it.

'I don't care how successful she is, she should be sent to prison. Of course, the BBC doesn't know what she has done. But if they were to find out I would like to think they'd sack her.'

Fewer than six per cent of reported rapes result in a conviction, but according to Tim Murray of the False Rape Society, this case is typical.

'Thousands of innocent men are tainted for ever by an unfair system,' he said. 'The accused should have the right to remain anonymous until a conviction. If they are cleared, the incident should be erased from their records.'

Robert - not his real name - is an articulate man in his 50s who met the BBC star in London in 2003. A keen amateur photographer, he was there to take promotional shots. The woman, who we will call Charlotte, was working for a commercial television station and asked Robert if he would take some publicity pictures to help further her career.

Within weeks they had embarked on a physical relationship. 'In addition to being very beautiful she was intelligent and funny. She was, still is, ambitious. Her career and becoming famous meant more to her than anything,' he said.

The pair filmed many of their encounters at his Central London flat, something he said was Charlotte's idea. 'It turned her on and I enjoyed it too,' he said. 'We agreed from the start that we'd have an open relationship. But we didn't just have sex. We cooked together, went to restaurants. I supported her whenever she was down.'

Robert, who separated amicably from his wife, with whom he has two teenage children, ten years ago, was introduced to her friends, but not her family. 'They have strict views on sex before marriage and Charlotte wanted them to believe she was a virgin.'

Still in her 20s, there was a considerable age gap between the two. 'It was flattering at first,' he admits. 'But as the months went by I became more self-conscious about it. Plus, I started to mistrust Charlotte.

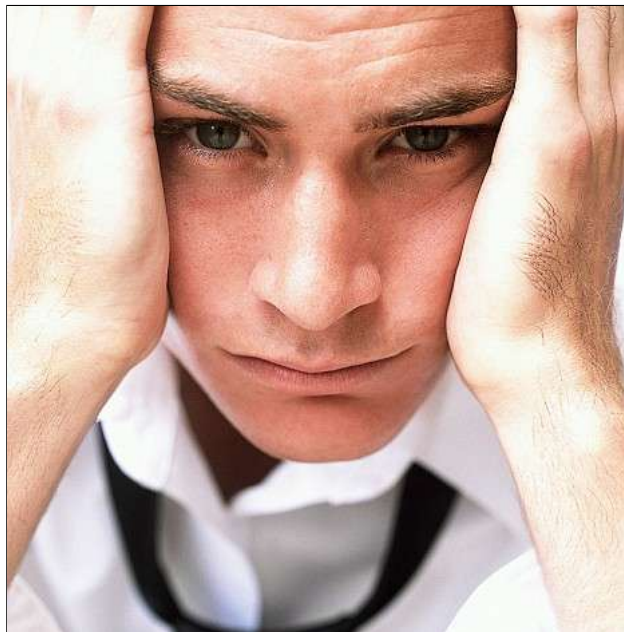
She lied to me about her whereabouts. And I knew she wanted to marry another boyfriend.'

By March 2006 he decided to end the relationship. He arranged to visit Charlotte's London home to pick up the keys to his flat from her.

Yet as he was waiting outside in his car, he was arrested. He was taken first to Hendon Police Station in North London, then to Marylebone police station, where he was accused of raping her, spiking her drinks, blackmailing and threatening to kill her.

'I was confused and powerless. I imagined myself in prison for life. I respect women and would not dream of touching one against her will.'

While in custody, Robert, a former employee of an international trading company, suggested the police visit his flat to pick up the DVDs he and Charlotte had made. 'I knew they should prove my innocence,' he said.



Men who are falsely accused of rape can have their lives ruined as the allegations remain on the police's computer (pictured posed by model)

He also thinks the footage was the reason for his arrest in the first place. 'Once I ended the relationship she became paranoid I would blackmail her with the DVDs,' he said. 'But she was judging me by her standards.'

After seven hours, he was released on bail.

'I dreaded telling my children and ex-wife what had happened,' he recalled. 'Charlotte had befriended them, even picking my children up from school. Luckily they supported me from the start.'

In police records, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request and seen by The Mail on Sunday,

Charlotte claimed that Robert had been blackmailing her by threatening to sell the DVDs to the Press.

She said he spiked her drink before they had sex and threatened to kill her if she left him. 'It was all nonsense, fabricated to substantiate her claim,' he said. 'She once told me she had been raped twice before. Now I think she uses both the allegation, and sex in general, as some kind of tool to get what she wants.'

As the days passed, the police began to find Charlotte's evidence increasingly 'tenuous'.

The DVDs showed that Charlotte 'would appear to be fully participating in sexual acts'.

On May 18, perhaps knowing her account contained, as police put it, a 'number of inconsistencies', she withdrew the allegation. The police officer recorded the incident as 'no crime'.

Robert then received a letter saying he was released from bail and that no further action would be taken. 'But there was no apology from Charlotte or the police,' he says. His anger was exacerbated when police told him in a letter that 'the matter remains recorded as rape'. It was eventually downgraded to 'an allegation of rape' after he protested.

Although the allegation had been withdrawn, one police officer had written in his records that: 'There is insufficient additional verifiable information to determine that no notifiable offence has been committed.'

Surprisingly, the law permits officers to register their disagreement with the outcome of a case in police records, with potentially devastating repercussions. While Charlotte's anonymity is guaranteed by the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act of 1976, Robert's ordeal will remain on his file indefinitely.

He believes he has been rejected from a job as a Home Office interpreter because he failed to clear criminal checks. An application for a US visa requires him to state whether he has ever been arrested for a crime, and he says he did not apply for a job as a photographer in London schools because his records would stop him being offered it.

A police spokesman would not discuss individual cases but said: 'The current Association of Chief Police Officers guidelines state that police forces retain allegations of serious crime for ten years. We are liaising with ACPO and the Information Commissioner about a review of this policy.'