

Woman who cried rape after date with man she met in internet chatroom is jailed for a year

By [DAILY MAIL REPORTER](#)
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An innocent man almost lost his freedom after being accused of rape by a woman he met over the internet.

Gary Wood was hoping for romance when he arranged to meet Natalie Jefferson after chatting to her online, but ended up facing a potential 10-year jail term.

Instead 27-year-old Jefferson is beginning a 12-month jail term after detectives saw through her lies.

Mr Wood, 31, of Walker, Newcastle, said he was still baffled by her motives.

'I just want to know why,' he said. 'Maybe she's is messed up in the head, maybe she's an attention-seeker or maybe it is a bit of both, but I could have lost everything because of what she did.'

Newcastle Crown Court heard how Jefferson, of Fellgate, South Tyneside, agreed to meet Mr Wood in Newcastle's Gateshead before going for a drink in nearby Jesmond.



Wronged: Gary Wood was accused of rape by Natalie Jefferson, who he met in an internet chat room

But she received a phone call during the evening and claimed one of her children had been taken to hospital.

Mr Wood offered to go with her but she only let him travel on the Metro underground system part of the way with her.



False allegation: Jefferson accused Gary Wood of attacking her near Luckies wine bar in Newcastle, above

He phoned her later but was horrified when she told him she had been raped by a stranger.

It was a lie - but she had already called police claiming Mr Wood himself had raped her. Soon officers were on his doorstep to arrest him.

He said: 'I got a call saying the police wanted to speak to me. They didn't say what it was at first but when they came to my flat, the officer said, "I will be up-front with you - we have had an allegation of rape against you."'

Mr Wood was held in custody for three hours.

Jefferson - also known as Natalie Dawn Dodsworth - had alleged Mr Wood attacked her on January 7 near Newcastle's Luckies bar and even agreed to go to a rape crisis centre.

But she was arrested and charged with perverting the course of justice after investigating officers interviewed Mr Wood and witnesses, as well as studying CCTV, and grew suspicious about her version of events. In court Jefferson admitted the charge.

Robin Patton, prosecuting, said: 'It's quite clear she had concocted this account for no good reason at all.

'The man's medical examination was about to start but police, having viewed the CCTV footage, immediately stopped the examination because they were sure he was an innocent man.'

Ailsa MacDonald, defending, told the court: 'There is a considerable psychiatric background and she has alcohol problems.'

Pronouncing sentence, Judge Esmond Faulks said: 'This was a huge waste of police time and, more seriously, led to the

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arrest of an innocent man.'

Det Con Graeme Barr, of Newcastle CID, said: 'We are happy with the sentence passed by the court as it sends out the message that people will be punished for making false reports of crime.'

'Gary is an innocent man and she could quite easily have ruined his life. I hope he can now put this behind him and get on with his life.'

Mr Wood said: 'I had met her on the internet. She didn't seem right as soon as I met her and kept going to the toilet, which was strange, but I never thought she would do anything like this.'

'I have never been in any trouble with the police before this. I was on bail for two weeks with this allegation hanging over my head.'

'I can't stop thinking that if there had been no witnesses or CCTV to prove that she was lying I would have been in real trouble and would have been sent down. I would have lost my friends and everything I've got.'

He added: 'It has still affected me and if I was to meet someone now, I would only do it in public. I am glad with the sentence but think she should have got more because she could be out and doing it to someone else in six months.'