



## **Feminist influence in the courts: the diabolical episode of the 30-second rapist**

Anna Marshall

Following pressure from feminist groups, the Western Australian parliament in 1985 dramatically amended the law relating to rape, first by changing the term rape to sexual assault and then greatly widening the definition of what could be classed as sexual assault.

**Many acts not previously constituting rape were included in the new Act. The criteria for sexual assault**

**was widened to include any type of penetration by any object or any part of another person's body where consent was not present and ongoing.**

It did not matter that force or threats were not used.

The penalty for any type of sexual assault was increased to fifteen years imprisonment.

Where any type of force was used, the charge was aggravated sexual assault, carrying a penalty of twenty years imprisonment.

**The draconian Act soon snared its first victim.**

Perth resident Kevin Ibbs was having consensual sex with Christine Watson on the night of 29 November 1986. Watson, a close friend of Ibbs's wife, Katrina Carter, was living in the same house with



**Kevin Ibbs life was ruined by two conniving women who conspired to have him charged with rape**

Ibbs and Carter. The sex act was taking place with the full knowledge of Carter who was in the house at the time.

As Ibbs was nearing ejaculation, Watson suddenly withdrew her consent to sex (so she later claimed) and tried to push Ibbs away. He continued for a short time. Too late, he was trapped.

He was charged with sexual assault and found guilty under the new law. The judge found that Ibbs had continued sexual intercourse for about **thirty seconds** without consent (for which he was later dubbed the 30-second rapist).



Judge Geoffrey Kennedy (pictured) sentenced him to **four years imprisonment.** [\[Details of the judgement and appeal\]](#)

Some years later Watson admitted to police that the whole incident was a set-up orchestrated by Carter to have Ibbs charged with sexual assault to get him out of the house they were sharing.

Christine Elizabeth Watson a.k.a. Christine Elizabeth Wardle and Katrina Ann Carter were subsequently convicted of conspiring to pervert the course of justice. They served seven months in jail. Their sentence for conspiring to pervert the course of justice was a fraction of the sentence imposed on the victim of their cruel conspiracy. Such is the imbalance in the court system.

Mr. Ibbs was finally acquitted in 2001, four years after it was revealed he'd been set up. He told ABC reporter David Weber that he found no solace in it.

"I'm the original living dead - the tissue on the outside's alive but there's nothing inside. That's it. It's gone for that long that the poison's just eaten it away."

He was asked how his time behind bars changed him: "Whenever there's a rape anywhere, you're waiting for the knock on the door. Please explain where you were. I've had the task force come through and luckily I was

living with my Uncle and he said where I was. I didn't have to say anything. He said no, he's been here."

He related the cost of his ordeal: "It's cost me over a million and a quarter . . . My life - 14 years - they can't give that back to me. I haven't seen my daughter for 14 years. I've been ruined as a tradesman and I don't know how my health is."

Mr Ibbs received no compensation for his wrongful imprisonment.

**It was all too much for Kevin Ibbs and in September 2008, he committed suicide. His body was found under the Mandurah traffic bridge in Western Australia. He was 56.**

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