

13bhp  
 ning  
 els  
 orcer  
 e  
 CD stereo  
 and immobiliser  
 rver's seat  
 this  
 mirrors  
 trol  
 warranty  
 assistance  
 can more.  
 5  
 need - and a  
 perfect sense.  
 CHRYSLER  
 0800 616138 OR WWW.CHRYSLER.CO.UK  
 0800 616138 OR WWW.CHRYSLER.CO.UK  
 PHONE BUSINESS  
 and research purposes. If you do not wish to be contacted please tick the adjoining box

by  
**Paul  
 Bracchi**

**D**Y THE time the police had arrived, her make-up was running, her clothes were dishevelled and her underwear had been ripped to shreds. 'I've been raped,' she said in a voice that reflected her distress.

Then, tearfully trembling, she recounted her terrible ordeal - how she had met a young man in a bar, how he had invited her back to his flat, and how, once inside, he emerged naked from the bathroom and dragged her into the bedroom, where he attacked and raped her.

No one, least of all the officers who listened to her pitiful account in a relative's house just 20 minutes after the alleged assault, could have failed to have believed her.

Her torn garments appeared to provide chilling proof of what had taken place. The suspected culprit was immediately arrested. Later, Andrew Bond was charged with rape. He knew that, if convicted, he faced a long prison sentence.

Last week, however, the case collapsed. This was not because the woman herself could not face the understandable prospect of going to court. The reason was altogether more shocking. It is contained on a video at the Liverpool offices of Andrew's solicitor. The tape is from CCTV footage at the tower block where he lives and reveals a quite different version of events to the one put forward by the so-called victim.

Twenty-five-year-old Andrew - who was about to start a degree course at university - is filmed entering the building with a female companion who has blonde hair and knee-high boots.

They chat and cuddle in the lift on the way to his 11th-floor apartment. About an hour before the woman leaves the flat. According to her police statement, remember she has just been subjected to a horrifying attack. Nevertheless, she looks composed and relaxed. She is neither crying nor frowning.

Next we see her getting into the lift. The security camera behind her. In the reflection of the elevator's metal walls, she can be seen pulling something out of her handbag. She begins to tear at it with her hands. It is a pair of knickers. In fact, the same ones she claimed had been ripped during the struggle.

Of course there was no struggle. There was no rape. The whole story was a fabrication, just like her 'torn' underwear.

**A**LL ANDREW was guilty of, it now emerges, was having a one-night stand. The countless other men - with someone he had met in a bar on a Saturday night out.

How did the police - and later the Crown Prosecution Service - miss such a vital piece of evidence? The tape had been in their possession for several months before the defence team asked to see a copy shortly before Christmas. The incriminating recording was passed by a legal executive working on Andrew's behalf within minutes of her arrest.

Even by the standards of false rape allegations, this was a particularly barrowing case. The stress forced Andrew to give up his university place, his home was nearly repossessed because he was no longer eligible for a student grant. He had to pawn his clothes to make ends meet. He had needed hospital treatment for a heart condition, and perhaps worst of all, he saw his good name dragged through the mud.

And what of his accuser? The identity of the woman is protected under the law. Indeed, all that can be revealed about her is that she is 28 and lives in Liverpool.

Her motive remains a mystery. Did she feel compelled to be better than her boyfriend, waiting at home and she couldn't explain why she was not so late? Or was she, in truth, Andrew paid a terrible price for her wickedness.

If it had been convicted, I would have been branded a sex offender for the next 10 years, said Andrew. "When someone makes that kind of allegation, it is not the case and it's a real concern about who is affected. Everyone suffers. Parents, if I had to go to all the people who meant something to me - friends, relatives, past girlfriends - and tell them what had happened, that I was completely innocent, that I was not a rapist. Can you imagine how humiliating this was?"

# Andrew's life fell apart when he was charged with raping a woman. He had to give up his degree and faced months of mental torture. The charges were finally dropped, but only after his lawyer spotted an astonishing piece of video footage...



**Ordeal:** When Andrew Bond met a girl in a disco, it was the start of an eight-month nightmare

was arrested,' Andrew revealed. 'Can you imagine what that was like for them? I was allowed to phone them. My mum answered. I told her: "Just get me out of here, Mum." She tried to reassure me, saying they would soon realise they had made a mistake.'

The gravity of the situation, if he was in any doubt, became frighteningly apparent when he met his in-laws the following afternoon - 11 hours after police had arrived at his front door - and he learned the truth. He had been charged with rape.

'She claimed that I emerged naked from the bathroom, dragged her off the sofa into the bedroom, ripped her underwear off, and raped her,' he said. 'I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It's the kind of storyline you see on a TV programme, not in real life.'

At 10pm that Sunday, Andrew was released on bail and went to stay with his parents. Of course, this was not the end of the matter. Every waking hour - and many sleepless nights - were dominated by one thought: 'Are the police ever going to believe me?'

That question was answered two months later when he returned to the police station with his father and his best friend and learned he was to be charged with rape.

'When the desk sergeant told me I had to come down and cry, he said, "Fleece don't put me in the car," while he read out the charges. The strength ebbed away from my body and I thought "I would kill anyone".'

SWABS were taken from his mouth for DNA purposes. Officers took his fingerprints and he was photographed. He was given a serial number - the classic police ' mug shot'.

Over the following weeks he stood in the dock during several magistrates' court appearances and his name was published in the local paper. This put an unbearable strain on his family, his father, Ron, who suffers from arthritis, was twice treated in hospital while doctors told him he was in danger of losing a leg.

'Nevertheless, Andrew decided to do his degree course. After two weeks, however, he had to leave because of the stress of the impending trial. He also returned the £4,900 grant cheque. Because I had been given up by his hospital job, he had no money.

To prevent his flat being repossessed, in short, his situation seemed desperate. Then Andrew remembered about the CCTV footage at the flat. The police officers, David Phillips and partners, who had arrived at the address shortly before Christmas, were hounded and taken into custody. 'It was difficult to convey exactly what was going through my mind as, heavy-eyed and still half-asleep, Andrew was confronted by four policemen.

Confusion, disbelief, shock would probably come close. Indeed, he told them: "I think you have made a mistake. Then one of the officers informed him: "We are arresting you on suspicion of rape".'

Andrew, who had never been inside a police station before, was handed a disposable white paper suit. Then he was stripped, made to wear a disposable white paper suit - his clothes were taken away for examination - and locked in a cell. 'I felt embarrassed and degraded,' he said. 'All I could think of is "Who is going to believe me?"'

Andrew read about such cases in the papers. 'I always thought "It must be true." I never crossed my mind that a "victim" might be lying, until now. Being locked in that cell was very traumatic. I kept pressing the buzzer and saying "let me out." I was very distressed and in a state - at least for another drink - and perhaps more arrangements to meet her to his parents. Officers called at their house at 6am, shortly after I

People who knew me never doubted it. But others who saw my name in the paper must have thought I was guilty. After all, not so long ago that is what I would have thought.

As Andrew points out: 'This could have all been avoided if the police had analysed the tape properly. I don't know why they didn't spot that more account of the film.'

'All I know is that you are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, not guilty until proven innocent, which is how I felt for the past eight months.'

Today, Andrew still receives counselling. It is plainly obvious that his nerves have been shattered by his experience; during our meeting he broke down more than once.

Yet, bewildering, rather than anger, is his feeling towards the woman who nearly destroyed his life. 'I just can't understand why she did it,' he says repeatedly.

His predicament was certainly compounded by the police investigation. Even when the reflection was brought to the attention of the Merseyside force, it took a further two months for the charges against Mr Bond to be dropped.

There were also other worrying aspects. The woman says she was groped in the lift on the way up to his apartment. The tape shows this was not the case. And if he had groped her, why did she then accompany him into his flat?

The woman says she remained inside for about 30 minutes. In fact, times on the video recording prove she spent more than an hour there. Mr Bond also had a 'fresh

'love bite' on his neck. In truth, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in these politically correct times, officers were eager - perhaps too eager - to accept the woman's account.

As Andrew points out: 'This could have all been avoided if the police had analysed the tape properly. I don't know why they didn't spot that more account of the film.'

'All I know is that you are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, not guilty until proven innocent, which is how I felt for the past eight months.'

Today, Andrew still receives counselling. It is plainly obvious that his nerves have been shattered by his experience; during our meeting he broke down more than once.

Yet, bewildering, rather than anger, is his feeling towards the woman who nearly destroyed his life. 'I just can't understand why she did it,' he says repeatedly.

His predicament was certainly compounded by the police investigation. Even when the reflection was brought to the attention of the Merseyside force, it took a further two months for the charges against Mr Bond to be dropped.

There were also other worrying aspects. The woman says she was groped in the lift on the way up to his apartment. The tape shows this was not the case. And if he had groped her, why did she then accompany him into his flat?

The woman says she remained inside for about 30 minutes. In fact, times on the video recording prove she spent more than an hour there. Mr Bond also had a 'fresh

Waterloo district. There, he met a young woman. They chatted and 'smooched' on the dance floor. 'At the end of the night, she asked me to go to another club. I told her she was quite welcome to come back to my flat for a coffee. She agreed, but made it clear that she didn't "want anything" to happen.' That suited me fine. I thought perhaps we could meet up again the following day and maybe have some kind of relationship. I was simple and she said she was, too. She seemed very pleasant.'

Back at his flat, the two sat on Andrew's sofa. Soon they have made an evening. 'I asked her: "Is this OK? Do you want to take it any further?" and she said: "Yes."

But a girl who was remarkable to happen, she was adamant that she would not have sex on the settee. Andrew insisted the bedroom would be "more comfortable". They made love for about 20 minutes.

Afterwards, Andrew went to the bathroom. When he returned, he was surprised to find the woman already getting dressed.

He had expected her to stay - at least for another drink - and perhaps more arrangements to meet her to his parents. Officers called at their house at 6am, shortly after I

rush to leave and turned down Andrew's offer to pay for a taxi home. He didn't have an address or a phone number to contact her again.

Of course, that should have been the end of the story. Andrew was not particularly romantic, one might say. He was a typical, single, heavy-eyed and still half-asleep, Andrew was confronted by four policemen.

Confusion, disbelief, shock would probably come close. Indeed, he told them: "I think you have made a mistake. Then one of the officers informed him: "We are arresting you on suspicion of rape".'

Andrew, who had never been inside a police station before, was handed a disposable white paper suit. Then he was stripped, made to wear a disposable white paper suit - his clothes were taken away for examination - and locked in a cell.

'I felt embarrassed and degraded,' he said. 'All I could think of is "Who is going to believe me?"'

Andrew read about such cases in the papers. 'I always thought "It must be true." I never crossed my mind that a "victim" might be lying, until now. Being locked in that cell was very traumatic. I kept pressing the buzzer and saying "let me out." I was very distressed and in a state - at least for another drink - and perhaps more arrangements to meet her to his parents. Officers called at their house at 6am, shortly after I

was arrested,' Andrew revealed. 'Can you imagine what that was like for them? I was allowed to phone them. My mum answered. I told her: "Just get me out of here, Mum." She tried to reassure me, saying they would soon realise they had made a mistake.'

The gravity of the situation, if he was in any doubt, became frighteningly apparent when he met his in-laws the following afternoon - 11 hours after police had arrived at his front door - and he learned the truth. He had been charged with rape.

SWABS were taken from his mouth for DNA purposes. Officers took his fingerprints and he was photographed. He was given a serial number - the classic police ' mug shot'.

Over the following weeks he stood in the dock during several magistrates' court appearances and his name was published in the local paper. This put an unbearable strain on his family, his father, Ron, who suffers from arthritis, was twice treated in hospital while doctors told him he was in danger of losing a leg.

Nevertheless, Andrew decided to do his degree course. After two weeks, however, he had to leave because of the stress of the impending trial. He also returned the £4,900 grant cheque. Because I had been given up by his hospital job, he had no money.

To prevent his flat being repossessed, in short, his situation seemed desperate. Then Andrew remembered about the CCTV footage at the flat. The police officers, David Phillips and partners, who had arrived at the address shortly before Christmas, were hounded and taken into custody. 'It was difficult to convey exactly what was going through my mind as, heavy-eyed and still half-asleep, Andrew was confronted by four policemen.