

Man jailed after false rape claim



Jailed - Robert O'Brien who falsely claimed he had been raped

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A YOUNG Wigan man has been sent to jail for crying rape.

Robert O'Brien falsely claimed that he had been sexually assaulted by a man who gave him a lift home from a bar in Appley Bridge.

Sentencing him to detention Judge David Aubrey, QC pointed out how serious the offence was and said only a custodial sentence could be justified.

He told the 20-year-old from Fern Close, Shevington, that such false claims undermine genuine rape allegations and make it harder for convictions to result.

Liverpool Crown Court heard that O'Brien's alleged assailant was arrested, questioned and detained for 13-and-a-half hours because of O'Brien's lies before being released on bail.

And the allegation led to the break-up of a long-standing relationship.

The court heard that fortunately police were suspicious about discrepancies in O'Brien's statement and two months later, following further inquiries, he was arrested.

Sarah Griffin, prosecuting, said that when interviewed on this occasion he admitted he had been lying and said the decision to fabricate the allegation was a "split second decision when he arrived home."

The investigation had involved two police forces and in Lancashire at least 10 detectives were committed to the inquiry, she said.

O'Brien, who has no previous convictions, pleaded guilty to attempting to pervert the course of justice.

Miss Griffin said that in the early hours of October 30 apprentice plumber O'Brien returned home after a night out and told his parents that he had been raped by a 39-year-old man whom he named.

He said he had been out drinking with his girlfriend at Sam's Bar in Appley Bridge and at the end of the night he and others were offered a lift home by the man.

He accepted the lift and after the man dropped the other passengers off the car was driven to Beacon Country Park in Up Holland where he was raped.

His mum called the police and at 6am the man was arrested and he immediately protested his innocence.

He was taken to Wigan police station and then to Skelmersdale.

"His car, clothing and mobile telephone were seized and he had to provide an intimate sample," said Miss Griffin.

When interviewed, he denied rape and said all sexual activity between them had been consensual.

Police officers took a statement from O'Brien's girlfriend and they noticed discrepancies in their accounts.

After the hearing, Det Insp Graham Hill, of Lancashire Constabulary's public protection unit, said: "We take rape and sexual offences extremely seriously and will thoroughly investigate any reports.

"Genuine victims should be confident in coming forward and reporting offences."

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