

Woman jailed over false rape allegation

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A Northamptonshire woman has been jailed after making a false allegation of rape that left her victim "suicidal".

Darren Ball, 25, was arrested in December 2007 after Alesha Watkins claimed he had attacked her after a party in Rushden, Northampton Crown Court was told.

He then spent 19 hours in custody, was charged and made four appearances in court as the sex assault claim hung over his head for more than seven months, the court heard.

But the charge was dropped in July last year after Watkins, 20, told police that she was withdrawing her complaint.

At first, she told them her change of plan was because a 3,000 contract had been taken out on her life. Threats were being made against her because she had approached police, she claimed. But this was another lie, the court was told.

In fact, lesbian Watkins, of Tewkesbury Drive, Rushden, had consented to sex with Mr Ball.

She had been drinking alcohol and taking cocaine before they became involved in a "play fight" at his home that led to sexual intercourse, the court heard.

The defendant subsequently pleaded guilty to perverting the course of justice.

Sentencing Watkins to 20 months in prison, Judge Charles Wide QC said: "The fact of the matter is that having made this false allegation of a very serious kind, it went on and on.

"A completely innocent 25-year-old man of good character was accused of rape falsely."

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