

# Teen boy sex victim found to be woman

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By TONY STICKLEY

Police have dropped sex charges against a 47-year-old man after discovering that the so-called victim was not in fact a 16-year-old boy, but a 30-year-old woman.

The Meadowbank painter - who faced 27 charges - spent five weeks in custody before red-faced police realised they had been conned.

The woman now faces possible prosecution and the man is considering seeking compensation for his loss of liberty.

When approached by the Herald, the man's lawyer, Ron Mansfield confirmed the circumstances of the case.

According to the police summary, the man had picked up the boy in Karangahape Rd in November and then met him semi-regularly until March.

But defence inquiries revealed that the initial meetings claimed by the complainant were not possible because the accused was in prison at the time.

The complainant's credibility was completely demolished when it was discovered that he was a woman.

Charges were dropped when police found that the boy had provided them with a false birth certificate.

The summary says that in April the complainant said he had a normal job and had changed his lifestyle and refused further offers of money for sex.

The boy alleged that in May the man forced him to inhale the fantasy drug "Rush" before making him perform oral sex and submit to other violations.

The complainant told police he did not report the matter because he distrusted police.

He alleged that similar incidents happened daily, and claimed that he submitted out of fear of receiving a beating.

It was only after being brutally raped that he went to police.

The boy was seen by doctors for unrelated matters, but they did not examine his genitalia.

Mr Mansfield said he did not want to be too critical as the woman had fooled not only police about her gender but health professionals as well. She had previously had her breasts removed.

As soon as police discovered the error, Mr Mansfield said, they acted appropriately and dropped the charges immediately.

Yesterday, Mr Mansfield said his client was relieved that the ordeal was over.

"He is confident that he would have been found innocent.

"However, he was concerned that he might have been awaiting a hearing on the allegations for some time."

The man could have waited between four months and a year for a trial.

Mr Mansfield said his client might seek compensation for his time in custody.

The officer in charge of the case, Detective Sergeant Peter Florence, said he was convinced the complainant was a male.

"We had doctors' reports that he was a male, he was introduced as a male and he looked like a male."

But the officer said he became suspicious that the age given did not ring true.

Detective Sergeant Florence said that if the doctors had examined the genitalia they would have seen they were dealing with a woman, but the complainant refused an examination and it was unnecessary as the incidents were considered historic.

He had spoken to the complainant three times and was stunned to learn she was female.

The woman now faced the possibility of criminal charges over the allegations but had not yet been interviewed, said Detective Sergeant Florence.

"They are fairly serious allegations to make."

He said it was a bizarre case and the woman had gone to great lengths to deceive.

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