

METRO

Woman jailed for crying rape after accusing innocent man of alleyway attack



[Jane Wharton](#) Saturday 7 Jul 2018 3:38 pm

A woman who cried rape to win another man's affection has been jailed for 26 months.

Saskia Hargrave, 22, fled justice after police launched an investigation into the false allegation and was only arrested months later after her mugshot was circulated on BBC TV show Crimewatch.

Scheming Hargrave claimed she had been raped in an alleyway, in Blackpool, Lancs, to gain the attention of a man she fancied, a court heard.



Saskia Hargrave has been jailed for crying rape. (Picture: Ben Lack)

Preston Crown Court heard innocent victim Gary Williams, an epileptic man who previously survived serious injuries in a fire, was held in custody for 16 hours, during which he suffered a seizure brought on by the stress.

He also had to have intimate evidence taken after Hargrave's sickening allegation he had attacked her in an alleyway for 45 minutes.

He was on bail for six weeks and had to go into hiding as the community learned of his arrest and he felt afraid.

He has since moved out of the area.

Sentencing Judge Simon Newell told Hargrave: ‘I have to do justice for Mr Williams for the considerable distress and upset caused to him and particularly him as a vulnerable man.

‘I have to take into account, of course, the abuse of police resources which are limited, and given the nature of this allegation, many resources at considerable cost to the public were put into play.

‘I also have to take into account, particularly in this day and age where society, the police and the courts are using their best endeavours to come to terms with allegations of sexual violence, that when something like this happens it considerably undermines those other genuine and real victims of sexual assault.’

Prosecutor Paul Cummings said Hargrave, then 19, was out socialising in Blackpool, Lancs, on July 8, 2015, with her victim and another man William Burrows, who had left at around 6pm.

Hargrave and her victim remained out, and went into Bar 19 on Queen Street at about 9pm, but by midnight had become separated.

Mr Williams decided to go home.

Mr Cummings said: ‘Meanwhile, it seems Mr Burrows decided to come back into town and contacted the defendant through her mobile at 11.40pm. When he made contact with her he was told by her that she had been raped by Mr Williams.

‘He went immediately to meet her on Springfield Road. She repeated then to him she had been raped.’

When police were called Hargrave was ‘sobbing and shaking’.

She later pointed out the area of an alleyway she alleged she had been attacked and was said to be ‘crying and sobbing hysterically, holding her head in her hands.’

The area was cordoned off and forensically examined and she had mouth swabs and a urine sample taken.

But in a police interview she described a different location and refused an intimate investigation at Preston’s SAFE centre.

Officers then checked CCTV, which proved she had left the bar alone and showed Mr Williams was still there at the time of the alleged rape.



Preston Crown Court (Picture: PA)

Hargrave, of Penrith Road, Ilford, Redbridge, then became uncontactable and was only traced to Essex after a BBC Crimewatch TV appeal.

During a police interview she accepted she had fabricated the attack to gain the attention of Mr Burrows.

In the dock Hargrave stared at the floor as defending, Paul Robinson, said she had used her time in HMP Styal positively.

He said: ‘At the time of the offences she was in a very bad place taking drugs and using alcohol.’

Ellen Miller, Services Director for the North of England at independent charity Victim Support said: ‘This is a terrible thing to be accused of and we are very aware that false claims of this nature can cause significant harm to those accused.

‘However it is important to highlight that untrue claims of rape are incredibly rare and extensive research shows that false reporting is much lower for rape than for any other offence.

‘It is far more common that rape victims will not report to the police at all – only 15 per cent of victims of serious sexual offences report the crime

and one of the main barriers is that victims fear they won't be taken seriously.

'They then, in turn, don't get access to the justice or the support that they need and so deserve.

'False allegations of rape have the potential to cast doubt on the credibility of victims' claims and further deter them from coming forward.

'We offer an independent service and victims can come to us for help and support, whether or not they have reported to the police.'

Det Sgt Chris Sanderson, of Lancashire Police, said: 'Hargrave's behaviour and subsequent actions were completely unacceptable.

'She wasted valuable police time constructing a web of lies to try and destroy an innocent man's life.

'Rape is a horrendous crime, with far-reaching effects for victims and for the communities in which the incident takes place.

'False reports divert police resources from genuine cases and it is for this reason that this woman was charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice.

'I can assure anyone reporting such a serious crime that every single report we receive is treated extremely seriously.'

<https://metro.co.uk/2018/07/07/woman-jailed-crying-rape-accusing-innocent-man-alleyway-attack-7690275/>