

# Swindon Advertiser

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## Rape arrest hell of innocent man

**THE parents of a man falsely accused of rape said the lies told about him made his life hell.**

Neil Izzard, 27, of Lower Marsh Road, Warminster, spent 15 traumatic hours in police custody after teenager Charmaine Bedford claimed he had raped her.

Officers later discovered the 18-year-old, of Talbot Road, Trowbridge, was lying and on Friday she was sent to jail for six months for perverting the course of justice.

Mr Izzard, a former pupil of Kingdown School, Warminster, did not want to talk about his ordeal but his parents, Neil and Marion, were relieved their son's name had been cleared.

"We could not believe it when he told us. I told him not to worry because they will be able to prove you are telling the truth," said Mrs Izzard.

"He does not say much, he keeps himself to himself, but it has been a terrible time for him.

"I don't know why she did it. I don't know how anybody could say anything like that about a man. It is not fair to other women who have been raped."

Bedford told officers Mr Izzard had attacked her in August this year.

She claimed he had picked her up in Trowbridge, driven her to Westbury and then raped her on Westbury White Horse.

As a result he was arrested and underwent invasive forensic tests. Police soon discovered he had an alibi for the time of the invented attack and so could not have carried it out.

But after insisting she had told the truth, when confronted by officers the 18-year-old eventually confessed the allegation was false.

Mrs Izzard said: "Everything just went mad when he was arrested. Lights were shone in the windows and there were police cars everywhere.

"It was a massive worry. We couldn't sleep all night because we didn't know what was going on."

Bedford admitted perverting the course of justice when she appeared at Swindon crown court.

Branding the crime 'wicked', Judge John McNaught jailed her for six months.

Mrs Izzard hopes the sentence will send out a clear message about the seriousness of false rape claims.

She said: "A lot of women have genuinely been raped. It makes it harder for them because they may not be believed."

Detective Constable Simon Guerri-Fear, of Trowbridge CID, who headed the investigation, said it had wasted police resources and described the impact on the victim of a false allegation as 'immense'.

"Not only has a man been needlessly arrested, detained and subjected to invasive procedures but the stigma of being arrested for rape remains large," he said.

"The police will wholeheartedly support all genuine rape victims, and would never seek to discourage real victims from contacting the police."

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