



# Edmonton woman convicted of mischief after making five false accusations of sexual assault

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An Edmonton woman was found guilty Thursday of falsely telling police that an armed intruder had tied her up and sexually assaulted her in her home and was apparently stalking her.

Heather Ann Marchand, 35, was convicted of four counts of public mischief, one count of attempting to commit public mischief and one count of unauthorized possession of a prohibited weapon.

Provincial court Judge Steven Bilodeau rejected a defence suggestion that Marchand did not intend to deceive police, as she was in an alcohol-and-drug-induced psychosis involving delusions and hallucinations and actually believed the crimes had occurred.

Instead, Bilodeau ruled the physical evidence at the alleged crime scenes — including Marchand "making her own body part of the staging" and her "preposterous trap-the-rapist ruse" — was knowingly set up by her so as to align with her concocted tale.

"I am satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that she knew what she was doing when she staged the crime scenes," said Bilodeau, adding Marchand also had to know a police investigation would follow.

The judge said the case was "highly unusual" and "far from routine" and called it "one of the most bizarre cases" he has ever seen.

According to an agreed statement of facts, Marchand reported five separate offences during a 3-1/2-month period in 2014 and none of the events occurred.

In the first one, she said a man tried to sexually assault her, but she fought him off. In the second, she claimed she was tied to the oven, sexually assaulted and cut with a knife. In the third one, she alleged the man left her a note with a heart sticker on it and in the fourth one, she said she shot the man while he was attempting to sexually assault her after walking around outside in an attempt to lure him there.

Court heard police responded to each incident and found various pieces of evidence, including a large wrench in the backyard, holes in the drywall, a bloody knife and various injuries to her body. Her mother also found her tied to the stove with her feet bound.

The fifth incident happened at Pigeon Lake and involved the same man tying her to a truck and running off after calling her names. Her grandmother found her with yarn

wrapped around her neck.

Court heard the RCMP were skeptical about the alleged crime at Pigeon Lake and called Edmonton police. A public mischief investigation then began and resulted in her being charged.

Court also heard at least 45 police units and 119 police officers were involved in the investigations into the false reports, as well as at least 23 outside agencies and 36 non-police officers. The total cost of the investigations was estimated to be \$188,000.

Marchand took the stand in her own defence and tearfully testified that, while she admits that the various reports she made to police were untrue, she still believes the incidents actually happened and is haunted by the memories.

A pre-sentence report was ordered and a date for a sentencing hearing is slated to be set July 14.

<https://edmontonsun.com/2016/07/07/edmonton-woman-convicted-of-mischief-after-making-five-false-accusations-of-sexual-assault/wcm/05c66d90-3307-44cc-8c6a-e6f83afa4e8e>