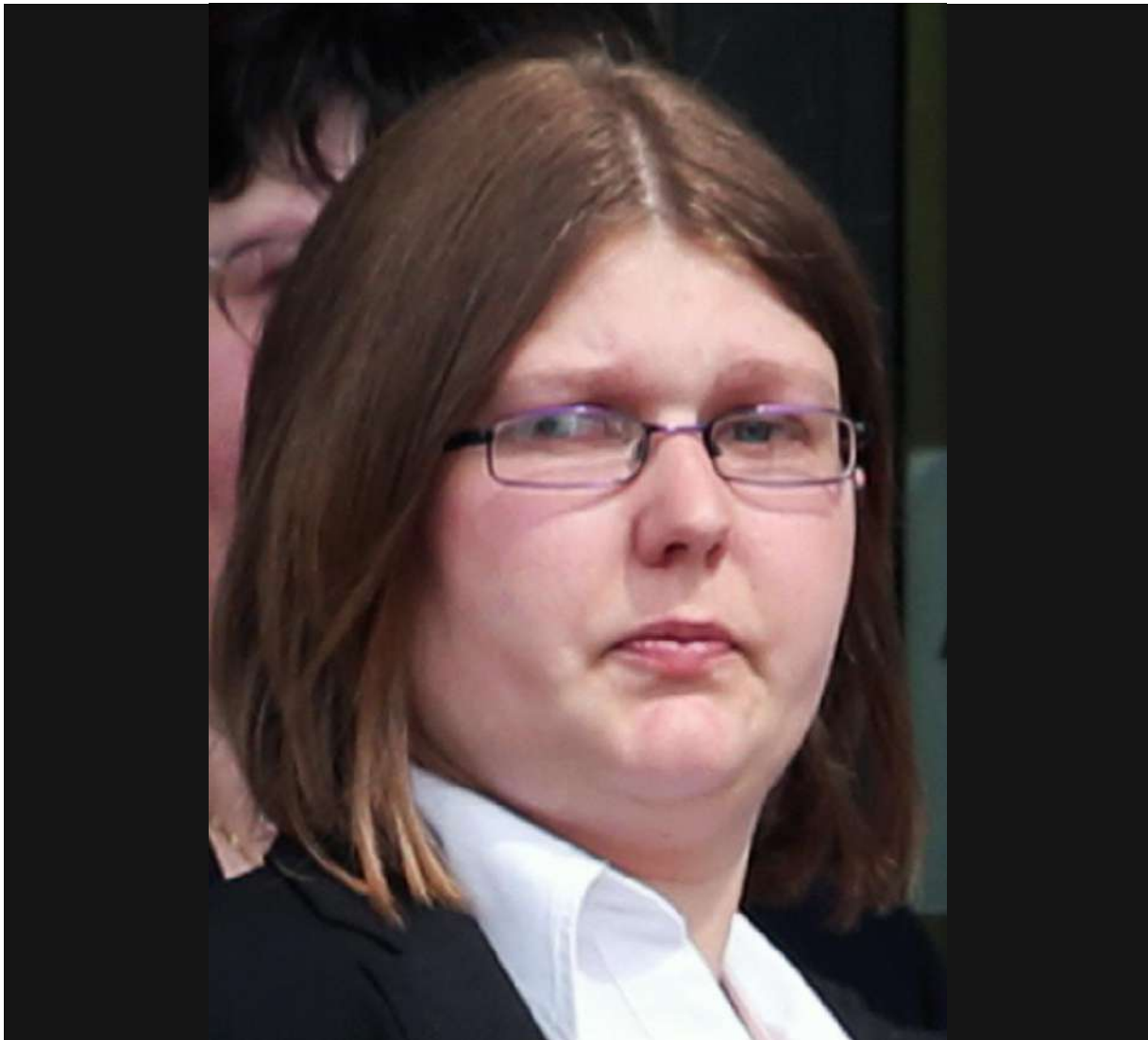


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## **Soldier tells how false rape claims ruined his life**

*By Neil Hunter*



CRYING: Philippa Costello

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**A SOLDIER arrested for a rape that never happened told how the allegation has ruined his life - as his accuser was jailed for eight months.**

The young father's relationship fell apart amid whispering in his community after Philippa Costello claimed she had been attacked in April 2011.

He was arrested and held for 15 hours, had intimate samples taken, and had to wait two months before the investigation against him was dropped.

Costello, 28, from Dishforth, North Yorkshire, continued with her cruel lie even though town centre CCTV footage proved the man was innocent.

She did not confess until she was due to go on trial last month on a charge of doing an act tending or intended to pervert the course of justice.

Her barrister, Alun Jones, told the court yesterday: "She felt stuck in a track. When she found herself in that hole, she kept digging, and she regrets that."

Judge Michael Taylor told Costello: "It is a tragedy for you to be standing before me in court today . . . I regret to say a prison sentence is inevitable.

"Regrettably, offences like this are not uncommon and a clear message has got to be sent out by the courts that those who make such allegations leading to the arrest and detention of perfectly innocent people must be marked out by way of being punished."

The court heard that Costello accused the squaddie after his friend "rather ungallantly" spurned her advances after meeting in a Ripon nightclub.

After apparently setting up a date, the man met another woman who was also keen on him and told Costello to f\*\*\* off, said prosecutor Peter Sabiston.

"This was to have a rather dramatic impact on the rest of the evening," said Mr Sabiston. "She was clearly distressed, insulted and offended by this."

As she sat outside crying, the soldier she was later to accuse, tried to comfort Costello, who works for a marketing company, the court was told.

Mr Jones said: "She accepts it is a serious offence but it was not a premeditated act. It was a spur of the moment act committed in drink."

In an impact statement, the squaddie says his relationship breakdown means he now no longer sees his daughter as often as he did.

"It was not long before everyone I knew knew I had been arrested," he says. "That's when the name-calling began, and I got very stressed.

"I felt this was a personal attack, especially when it was from someone I didn't know. I don't think my partner 100 per cent believed me.

"Since my arrest my life has changed considerably as a direct result. There is a stigma attached to people alleged to have committed these offences.

"It may be years before I can remove that stigma."

Costello, of Ivy Cottage, Dishforth, who has no previous convictions, admitted the charge, and wept as she was jailed.

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/10504507.soldier-tells-false-rape-claims-ruined-life/>