



GUILTY PLEA Mum of six facing prison for making three false rape claims against one man

Mum of six who admitted making false allegations against the same man had previously given fake alibi for killer son



Facing jail time: Hannah Harkin

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This is the disgraced mum-of-six who pleaded guilty this week to making her THIRD false rape claim against the same man.

Hannah Harkin, from Newtownstewart, Co Tyrone, admitted perverting the course of justice by making a false claim of rape, just over two years ago.

But we can reveal the 58-year-old – who’s facing jail when sentenced next month - was convicted three months ago of making two similar claims of rape.

A judge then described her behaviour as “reprehensible” adding, “The stain that can attract can be very hard to repair and very distressing for him, yet this conduct was repeated, and the man was arrested.”

When confronted by the Sunday World this week Harkin blamed her addiction to alcohol for her shocking behaviour.

Harkin, who was forced to flee her Omagh home 18 years ago after she was convicted of providing a fake alibi for her killer son, is pictured here for the first time.



Sheepish: Our reporter spoke to Harkin this week

For making false allegations and wasting police time in February and then again in May 2020 she was handed two consecutive four month prison sentences last October but both were suspended for three years.

She had contacted the police on both occasions and claimed the man had lured her to her bedroom and raped her but the next day had withdrawn the allegations.

The man had been arrested and strenuously denied the claims.

She was also ordered by a judge to pay £1,000 compensation to her victim for the distress she had caused him.

Now Harkin – whose killer son Gerard Donnell beat to death a defenceless man in 2003– is facing jail after a third rape allegation which preceded the first two phoney claims.



Killer: Gerard Donnell

While the allegations last year were dealt with in the Magistrates Court on Tuesday heartless Harkin appeared in the dock of Dungannon Crown Court.

Here she faced the more serious charge of perverting the course of justice and had been due to stand trial when she changed her plea to guilty to the offence which dated back to November 2018.

No details surrounding the case were disclosed during the short hearing, although it was previously heard Harkin made a report to police contending to have been raped by a specific male.

Judge Paul Ramsay ruled pre-sentence reports would be required and remanded Harkin on continuing bail of £500 bail.

On Thursday a sheepish Harkin told the Sunday World she “deeply regretted” what she had done admitting she had made the false claims against the same man.

Asked why she had done such a thing she replied: “I was drunk, I know it was wrong but I felt he was walking all over me and I just couldn’t see it.

“Of course, I deeply regret what I did but I was battling an alcohol addiction. I had a drink problem.”

And she accepted she might be going to jail.

“I’m very worried about going to jail. All I know is I won’t be doing anything like this again. I was angry and drunk when I called the police. I’m sorry it happened.”

But we can reveal Harkin hides a dark secret after she provided a fake alibi for her son who had just battered a defenceless drinking pal of hers to death.

Her son Gerard Patrick Donnell served just five years for smashing to death 48-year-old Omagh man Andrew Bannon in 2003.



Andrew Bannon's family, Sean, Ann-Marie and Grainne

Donnell, who was highly intoxicated himself at the time of the killing, carried out the barbaric act because he thought his mum was involved in some kind of relationship with Mr Bannon.

He was also convicted of GBH with intent on another man and perverting the course of justice in connection with the same incident.

Hannah Harkin was convicted of withholding information after an Omagh bar man heard her along with three others – including her killer son – concocting a false alibi.

The killing shocked the community around Mullaghmore and Hannah was forced out of the area - such was the anger felt towards her.

She was handed a suspended prison sentence after a bar man had overheard her, her killer son and three others openly discussing an alibi in a local pub.

When she appeared at court Harkin was asked why she had not notified the police as soon as she became aware of what her son had done to Mr Bannon she replied she regretted not contacting the police at the time before adding, "it was a stupid thing to do".

Andrew Bannon, a popular character who was well known throughout Omagh, was brutally beaten by Donnell with a pick-axe handle.

Donnell was originally sentenced to 14 years in 2005 when a murder charge was dropped, and he pleaded guilty to manslaughter.



Brutal death: Andrew Bannon

But he appealed his sentence and had it reduced to 10 years and with 50 per cent remission he walked after just five years inside.

Last night Mr Bannon's daughter Ann-Marie told the Sunday World Hannah Harkin along with her son, who has almost 500 convictions, had completely disregarded the law for years.

Ann-Marie had set up a support group for victims of violent offenders and she had taken a campaign to Stormont pushing for more support for victims rather than what they saw as too much support for offenders.

"Hannah Harkin and her son have shown blatant disregard for the law throughout the years since dad's killing," she said last night.

"Sometimes we question when is rehabilitation of such offenders a waste of time and taxpayers' money."

<https://www.sundayworld.com/crime/mum-of-six-facing-prison-for-making-three-false-rape-claims-against-one-man-39982529.html>