

# IrvineTimes

## News

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## Ayrshire man found not guilty of rape calls for law change

By [Calam Pengilly](#) Reporter

**A MAN who was this week cleared of rape has called for those accused of similar crimes to remain anonymous unless they are found guilty.**

Graham McClung, now 29, was found not guilty by a majority verdict of a charge of rape against a 17-year-old girl, who can't be named for legal reasons, after a night out at the Buf Bar in Prestwick between September 14 and 15, 2019.

The pair had been dancing together inside before engaging in sexual activity in a lane outside the bar. The girl would later claim that the sex was not consensual.

Despite having his name cleared in court, Graham says that the mark of this case will stay with him for the rest of his life. He says that since the moment it first came out that he was being charged, it was as if he was already guilty.

He said: "I've had to restart my whole life. When that accusation came out in the papers my life was ruined, it was like everything I knew in life was gone. My job, my partner, some of my friends, some family, it was just all done."

Friends walked out of his life. He split with his fiancée, who he had been with for nine years, and he felt he had to quit his job as an engineer with Spirit Aerosystems.

"It was all about trying to rebuild some sort of life waiting for this day to come, which was hard," Graham said.



## Tarbolton man calls for change to law after being found not guilty of rape

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“The mental strain and the whole thought process of it all, was just absolutely destroying”

In absolute despair at the turn his life had taken, and how one accusation had ripped up his life goals and plans, Graham found himself in a very dark place - one that he almost didn't get out of.

“I tried to take my own life,” he said.

“Once or twice I ended up in hospital. It literally tried to kill me, the whole mental side of it.

“So to get that result yesterday, I'd felt like I'd been waiting two years to find out something that I already knew.”

Now Graham wants the justice system to be altered so that people like him are not named until they're found guilty.

He says that naming someone accused of rape before a verdict is delivered is like a sentence in itself.

"Four days ago, I was the most horrible guy in Scotland," he said.

“The way the papers printed me. I was this evil rapist, but yesterday I got a majority verdict of not guilty.

"Some of the things I've experienced, some of the things I've witnessed, every day you question yourself, 'Why me? Why did this have to happen to me?'

“As horrible as it sounds, some days I even felt guilty for not being guilty.

"The way the justice system works, the way the media works, it's weird. I feel that the accused should never be named."

It's been argued that identifying the accused in rape cases could encourage other potential victims of the accused to come forward to the police.

But Graham says that's lazy police work, and that somebody's name shouldn't be pulled through the trash on the off-chance that there might be other victims.

"The police have got a process to follow," he said.

“They investigate my background, they spoke to my fiancée, who I was with for nine years, who said I'm not violent - and then they go to other people.

"At the end of the day, why should I be scrutinised and interviewed the way I was when the person who has accused me of this has been mollycoddled?

"Fair enough, if this genuinely did happen, I completely understand the panic, the heartache, the shame that they'll go through.

“But surely there needs to be some kind of investigation into this person.

"I feel that there's too many men being wrongly accused of this because of the society that we're in today.

"I kind of blame social media, in the way that everything is just blown up.

"If I go for a job and the employer Googles my name, it's going to come up that I'm this absolute evil rapist. Now what kind of picture is that painting of me? "They're not going to understand that I was found not guilty by a majority verdict.

"It's funny, because I've heard this said so many times in the past three weeks, the whole innocent until proven guilty thing. But that's not the case, it's definitely not.

"I feel that I was guilty until proven innocent. Especially in a sexual case.

"I think it should be a closed court until that day of verdict, until that verdict comes out there should not be a reporter allowed in that court.

"I'm a shadow of my former self. If I'm talking to someone, all I'm thinking is 'do they know?' and it shouldn't be like that. I should be able to explain to people 'look, I've been accused of this' - it shouldn't be them reading it in a newspaper article that I'm the most evil person on this planet."

For now, Graham is focusing on getting his life back on track now that his almost two-year ordeal has come to an end.

But, in time, he hopes to assist other men who find themselves wrongly accused.

He said: "I've got to rebuild my life now. I just want people to know that I'm not guilty of what I was accused of, and once things are settled, I want to try and seek justice for men who have gone through this, because it's not fair."

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**Uncle Peter** 8th September 01:17 am  
User ID: 3670486

It is sickening when accusers can just walk away. My ex made an appalling story for her daughter to repeat in court but ho hum. You're the winner so walk tall as I do and you find out

who real friends are. A clear conscience always wins. I've more friends now and she has proven what she is.

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