



Derby man's years of hell facing false child rape allegations

He was cleared of all charges

BY Martin Naylor Courts and legal affairs correspondent

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Victor Hubert was cleared at a trial at Derby Crown Court (Image: Derby Telegraph)

A Derby man has told how his and the lives of other innocent people have been ruined by false child rape allegations. Victor Hubert said, since January 2020, when

they first arose, he had to be "guarded with every word" he uttered, knowing he was totally innocent of any crime but naturally fearing people would find out about the truly horrific allegations against him.

The 74-year-old said that the 14 court appearances he made since being charged have had a detrimental effect on both his physical and mental health. And being found not guilty of all the charges laid against him during a trial at Derby Crown Court this year has brought to an end the "continual stress from the threats to my freedom and integrity".

Mr Hubert said: "When the judge said 'I instruct you, the jury, to find the defendant not guilty on all charges', it brought to an end the most stressful three years of my 74-year life and I believe my prosecution is an excellent example of how wild and false claims can be made, reported and immediately believed by the public authorities without first checking and without any credible evidence. Innocent people's lives have been ruined."

Mr Hubert and two other Derby people were all cleared of child rape and sex assault charges during a trial earlier this year. He faced two counts of the most serious charge.

He said: "In my circle of friends children are sacrosanct, they should be protected by adults who should know better. It is one of the most heinous of crimes to harm a child in any way. Allegations of a serious sexual nature began to be made against the other people. Then, out of the blue, came similar allegations against me.

"Circumstances dictated that when these allegations were first levelled at me in January 2020, it was not possible to tell or consult family or friends and discuss my situation. I had only a tight-knit group of four confidants who knew what was going on and having to be guarded with every word said, especially in public where there exists an automatic assumption that, if the police have charged you, you must be guilty. It was all extremely stressful."

Mr Hubert, whose name has been changed for the purposes of this story, said: "For every one of the 14 assorted court hearings and pre-trial reviews before this case was brought to a conclusion, routes and timings had to be planned, especially in the vicinity of the court house to avoid meeting any acquaintances, and a back-up story developed to explain my presence in the court building should I encounter anyone I knew. As the matter involved a child under the age of 16, there were at least reporting restrictions.

"Continual stress from the threats to my freedom and integrity were always there in the back of the mind. Days spent wracking my brain, constantly trying to think where have these false allegations come from, who made them up, what was their motive and what was it that I was not being told about, nights without sleep wondering what other false allegations were going to be thrown at me.

"The mental stress translated into physical stress, and having had one minor stroke many years ago, it was only a matter of time before the situation was exacerbated and I now have an even more reduced use of my right side.

"There has been a considerable financial cost to me. Although technically retired, when these allegations first emerged I was a partner in a small but successful

business. This business was dependant on an ability to visit suppliers overseas, negotiate prices and arrange transport and documentation. Covid had a serious effect on sales, but restrictions imposed by the court severely hampered my efforts to obtain new supplies."

Mr Hubert said: "The terms and conditions of bail under which I have lived for the past three years required that I be immediately available. Court lists are only published at 4.30pm for the following day and on one occasion I received a message from my solicitor at 5.30pm informing me that I was due in court at 10am the next day.

"At the time I was out of town visiting my elderly mother and had to drive back through the night to be in court the following day, leaving an extremely perplexed and upset mother. With these conditions in place, any thought of leaving the UK went by the board, getting back from a remote valley somewhere in Europe at the drop of a hat was a non-starter and the business had to fold.

"After nearly three years of hell, I can hold my head held high, my reputation and integrity intact, but at a price. As I walk down the streets of Derby I can only think of the damage that has been caused and shed a quiet tear."

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