

This file contains three images scanned from the same newspaper. In the first report, from page 5 of the October 2, 1996 issue, his name is given as Stephen Derricott. (Lee is his middle name).

The second is the front page story, and the third is from the comment/editorial page of the same issue although (not noticeable here) it is misdated December 30, 1996.

Scroll down to read.



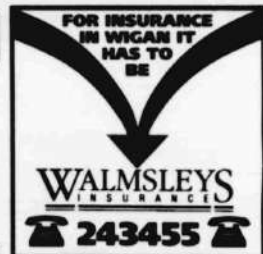
Rape charge

A TEENAGER accused of rape has been sent for crown court trial by Wigan magistrates.

Stephen Derricott, 19, who had been residing at a Manchester bail hostel, was given permission by justices to return to live at his parents' home in Norley Hall Avenue, Wigan. He was committed on conditional bail to appear at Bolton Crown Court on Monday, November 11.

WIGAN 40p **Observer**

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Observer
review
of '96
See Pages 18 & 19

Victim of false sex accusation bids to clear name after months of despair

RAPE HELL

EXCLUSIVE by Anne O'Neill

TEENAGER Lee Derri-cott has told of his living hell after being accused of a rape he didn't commit.

The 19-year-old was arrested and held in custody for nine weeks before his so-called victim dropped charges.

Now he is trying to clear his name after the case was thrown out of court.

Lee, of Norley Hall Avenue, Norley Hall, said: "There was a time when I thought I would go to prison for a very long time for something I just didn't do."

"When I found out that the girl had said I raped her I couldn't believe it. I even started laughing."

He was locked up in Hindley prison before being transferred to a bail hostel in Manchester.

The 19-year-old girl who accused him of rape made a complaint to police in July - but it was November before the case was dropped.

Lee, whose girlfriend of three years stood by him throughout the trauma, knew the girl but had never dated her before.

While driving around in his car one evening in July this year in

Newtown he spotted her and pulled over to chat her up.

Lee said: "I stopped the car and asked her if she wanted to go for a drive."

"We drove round for a bit because she said she wanted to look for her mates. She was happy to be in the car. She wasn't upset or anything like that."

"After a while we went up to Foundry Lane at Highfield and that's when we had sex. I didn't rape her - she gave her consent."

"Later I dropped her off at a friend's house. She asked if I'd see her again. I said no because I had a girlfriend. She was upset when I said that. I just used her for sex and I know that was wrong but I didn't want to see her again."

"I thought that it would be a one-night stand and no-one would ever find out about it."

It was the early hours of the morning when he arrived home when Lee's nightmare began. His parents who had received a visit from the police told Lee that he had been accused of rape.

He went to the police station straight away with his parents where he was arrested and locked up before facing magistrates.

Before long all the family's friends and neighbours learned that Lee was up for rape.

Lee, who couldn't eat or sleep throughout the ordeal, said: "I didn't like going to the shop because I knew that everyone was talking about me."

"No-one would say anything to my face but I knew exactly what they were thinking."

All the time Lee, who hoped and prayed that the truth would soon come out, was terrified when thinking about how long he could have gone to prison for.

He added: "What happened to me makes me think about how many other innocent men could be in prison right now."

"Now I just want to get on with my life and try to put all this behind me."

Lee's dad, Stephen, 39, said that he and his wife Pauline, 37, never doubted their son's innocence.

He added: "It's been like a living nightmare for us. I knew he hadn't done it. He's no angel but since being a kid that lad can't lie to me."

Pauline said that she used to believe every man accused of rape was guilty before her own son found himself in the same position.

"Now when I read the papers and it says accused of rape I wonder when it is never mentioned again if the men are innocent."

Comment, page 6



OLD view

TO be accused of a crime you have not committed is bad enough. But to be accused of rape is horrific.

Sex offenders are treated with the contempt they deserve in prison. If we are to believe the horror stories that come out of our jails then teenager Lee Derricott's life inside will have been like a living hell.

It's unfortunate that lags don't discriminate between those found guilty and those that are merely on remand and awaiting trial.

Unfortunate because Lee will be haunted by the taunts and threats of his fellow inmates for the rest of his life.

And what of his so-called victim? Does she get her name dragged through the courts and plastered all over the newspapers when she decides that perhaps it wasn't rape after

all? No. Unless the police decide to pursue a charge of wasting police time, she will probably never know what it feels like to be the accused.

Our legal system fails to protect the innocent. In this horrible, sordid case, it simply protected the guilty party. Call that justice?

WELL, it's nearly over and what a memorable year 1996 has been, folks - if not for all the best reasons.

Many of us have had more than our share of heartache and misery.

But in the face of adversity we Wiganers always seem to pull through.

And despite the evil which stalks our streets, the overwhelming feeling when

looking back on 1996 is one of hope for 1997.

Hope derived from the bravery of people like babysitter Tracy Carradine who, despite suffering terrible burns, plucked two young children from a blazing house.

Hope derived from the fortitude of children like two-year-old Elise Du Toit, the daughter of Wigan RL hero Nick, who faces a daily battle against cystic fibrosis.

Hope derived from the determined patience of couples such as Jane and Bernard Mullaney who were given a wonderful Christmas present in the shape of three beautiful babies after five years of trying for a family.

And, of course, hope derived from - the National Lottery. Here's wishing you all scoop as much as the lads from Hindley did in October and have a HAPPY NEW YEAR.