

## Hampstead Highgate Express

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# Kato Harris warns men after Camden rape acquittal: 'Don't become a teacher'

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*Kato Harris.*

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A man cleared of raping a 14-year-old girl while teaching at a Camden school has warned other men to avoid the profession after the accusation made him “toxic”.

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*Kato Harris.*

Kato Harris, 38, said he is now unemployed, living in a bedsit, about to go on benefits – and even pledged to kill himself after he was accused of raping a pupil three times at a girls' school.

Teaching made his life “like a wonderful dream” while his career was going well and he was expecting a child, but when he was tried for rape last year his life was destroyed and he was in “total shock”.

He told the *Mail on Sunday*: “I would certainly advocate that no man qualify as a teacher. It is just not worth it.

“What is the lesson here? There is nothing to protect the male teacher.”



*Kato Harris.*

He added: “I had to give up my dream job because of a crime I didn’t commit,” he said, adding that it will be “one of the biggest challenges” to forgive his accuser.

“I am unemployed, living in a bedsit and will soon be on housing benefit. I am toxic.”

It took a jury 26 minutes to find Mr Harris, of Richmond, not guilty when he was tried at Isleworth Crown Court in July.

He was working as head of geography and assistant head at the school when he was accused in December 2014 of having raped a girl during lunchbreaks in autumn 2013.

Mr Harris said he is now considering a job in a crematorium, adding: "If I knew on the day I qualified what I know now, I would never have become a teacher.

"I will never work with children again – I will never put myself in that position of vulnerability."

He also said he had made the decision to kill himself if he was charged, but that with the arrival of a baby daughter he wanted to carry on and prove his innocence.

Mr Harris added: "I've looked into the abyss. But every day I wake up and I'm a daddy and not in prison – and that's the best thing that I could have hoped for."

After he was found not guilty, Mr Harris told a crowd outside the court: "The last 20 months have put massive stress on my family.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their love and care.

"I am grateful for the hundreds of letters from former colleagues, friends, past pupils who sent messages of support. I will reply to all."

He added: "It is my sincere wish that this extraordinary case does not deter people who have been victims of sexual abuse coming forward in the future.

"There is a beautiful world out there and for 20 months I've been terrified of it, and I've been hiding from it."

"I'm now going into it a good man, and a free man."

A spokesman for campaign group [accused.me.uk](http://accused.me.uk) – which seeks to defend men from false rape accusations – said it has seen "an increasing stream of lies" that are "ruining the lives of men like Kato Harris".

He added: "Whilst all allegations of a sexual or violent nature against women and children need to be taken seriously, his case is one of many that shows that decent men are being publicly pilloried for things they didn't do."