

Prison for chatroom woman who lied about rape

By Richard Savill

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A MOTHER who falsely accused a man of rape was jailed for six months yesterday. Julie Renouf's claims led to the suspect, Andrew Williams, being questioned for 15 hours and wasted nearly 2,000 hours of police time.

Renouf, 34, a mother of two, said she was attacked by a stranger and detectives believed that a highly dangerous rapist was at large, Judge Graham Cottle said at Truro Crown Court.

She initially told police she was imprisoned in her car and raped by a motorist who stopped after she broke down in a lay-by. Police appealed for help from the media, describing her as traumatised and psychologically scarred.

Detectives later established that she consented to sex with Mr Williams, whom she met through an internet chatroom.

Renouf, of Redruth, Cornwall, admitted intending to pervert the course of justice.

Judge Cottle said that for Mr Williams it "must have been a living nightmare". He spent two months in peril of prosecution.

Tony Randall, prosecuting, said Renouf, a care assistant, encountered Mr Williams through a chatroom and arranged to meet him at a service station, near Saltash, Cornwall. She was a willing partner when they had intercourse.

When Renouf later arrived at her sister's house in Plymouth, she was very distressed and said she had been held against her will by a man in her car.

On Jan 5, Renouf made a new statement saying she was raped by a a man she met through a chatroom.

Police arrested Mr Williams at his home in Bristol and he said she agreed to have sex and had telephoned him several times over Christmas. Mr Williams was eventually released on bail. Simon Laws, for Renouf, said she offered Mr Williams her apologies. Renouf had been treated for depression and sought comfort from Mr Williams. Her marriage was unhappy.

She made up the rape because she was upset at having been unfaithful for the first time. "It was a depressed, miserable and confused state of mind that produced one lie after another," he said. Renouf had been ostracised by her family, her marriage was over and she had been spat at in the street.

Outside court, Mr Williams, 27, said: "I am glad she got what she got. For me it has been hell and I am glad it is all over."

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1382008/Prison-for-chatroom-woman-who-lied-about-rape.html>