Two Salisbury men accused of rape and assault are now free after being cleared of those charges.

The woman that initially came forward claiming to have been raped apparently admitted to making up those allegations. She is facing a potential charge of "making a false statement to police" and could receive up to a $500 and/or prison time.

But the fear, is that the damage is already done.

"It's hard enough for them to come in," says Lieutenant Brian Swafford with the Fruitland Police Department. "They feel like they're going to be judged or not going to be believed or it's going to be their fault. Sometimes there will be a third party that lets us know and we reach out and try to get their end of the story a lot of times they're reluctant to tell us everything."

The accusations happened back on May 5th, when a woman came forward accusing two Salisbury men of rape. It resulted several charges against each of them, including false imprisonment, and for one of the two men, first degree rape, which can result in a life sentence.

The woman's story started to unravel days later until she admitted she made the story up. On Monday, the charges against the two men were dropped.

"This did not happen the way the complainant said it happened, therefore the appropriate justice required that these charges be dismissed," says Wicomico County State's Attorney Matt Maciarello.
According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), 32 out of every 100 rapes get reported to police. In Wicomico County, 2013 data shows sixty rapes were reported, but the county’s domestic violence shelter, Life Crisis, reports that 364 victims were treated.

Lt. Swafford says false reports are very rare but they do occasionally see victims take their story back after telling the truth for one reason or another. He says that is why rape cases are so difficult to investigate and every case must be handled delicately.

"It's very difficult and you really have to take extra steps to make sure that you have all of your facts together before you get to the point where you're ready to charge somebody."

Maciarello says he hopes the actions of this one person do not discourage rape victims from coming forward. As the investigation is on-going, he says detectives are actively trying to find out why the woman made these accusations in the first place.

"This is also a person crying out for help," he says. "There's a reason why a person does this, so another interest to the state is trying to get that person some assistance as well."