I CANNOT resist responding to an article telling of the anguish suffered by a taxi driver and his family (ECHO, May 31).

Terence McCaughrey had been accused of raping a young woman during the summer of 2002. For almost a year, he lived under a public cloud of suspicion, while awaiting the jury trial that eventually cleared his name.

The alleged victim's name, meanwhile, has been protected, both at the time of the charge and throughout the subsequent trial.

Both as a human being and former Victim Services co-ordinator, I am appalled by the inequality of justice often dispensed when allegations such as this are made.

Allegations frequently receive front page coverage. The outcome of trials, those with verdicts of not guilty, often languish on pages 9 and 10.

It is time to address the imbalance in the scales of justice and acknowledge that our judicial system considers those charged as innocent until proven guilty.

My sense of justice and fair play is outraged by the character assassination suffered by people such as John Leslie and Terence McCaughrey. It is time we give them and their families some protection and not try them in the court of public opinion.

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