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Girl confesses she made up rape claim

By Gareth Bethell

POLICE wasted more than 120 hours' work when a team of 14 officers was set up to find a rapist who never existed.

A 17-year-old girl, who claimed to have been attacked in Faringdon Road Park late on Monday night, confessed yesterday to having made the story up.

She could now be taken to court for wasting police time, just as a 20-year-old Liden woman was in May.

Det Insp Mark Garrett, who was leading the investigation, has moved to reassure the public that there is no sex attacker on the loose.

People in the park yesterday said they were horrified at the actions of the girl.

A team of seven detectives and seven uniformed officers was assembled to catch the man who allegedly carried out the attack.

But officers noted a number of inconsistencies in her story and yesterday she withdrew her allegation.

Det Insp Garrett said: "There is no sex attacker for this alleged incident as the man never existed so I want to put the local community's fears at rest.

"I identified a number of inconsistencies throughout the investigation which did concern me but I continue to investigate with an open mind until she withdrew her allegation.

"It is very frustrating when crimes are falsely reported to the police."
"A great deal of time and resources are put into investigating serious crimes such as this alleged rape, which also, understandably, generates fear within the community."

Det Insp Garrett also said genuine victims of sexual assaults should not hesitate to come forward.

"I would like to reassure genuine rape victims that they will receive complete victim care and encourage them to contact the police," he said.

"False reporting is a serious matter and each case is considered for wasting police time."

Dr Michael Berry, a chartered clinical forensic psychologist who practises in Manchester, said there were a number of possible explanations for the girl's behaviour, including attention seeking, regretting consensual sex with someone or suffering post traumatic stress disorder from a past rape.

"Those are the most common reasons," he said. "It does tend to be younger women in the sense that you are unlikely to have a 50 plus woman making a false allegation of rape."

Police are still investigating an alleged rape of a 16-year-old girl on Stratton Road, near to Matalan in Greenbridge.

The assault took place between 10.30pm and midnight on Sunday, July 2.

In April this year the new Swindon Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) was opened at The Gables a separate building next to the Gablecross police station.

It is a jointly funded care service where victims of sexual assault can refer themselves anonymously or via other health and welfare agencies, for treatment and after-care.

Victims of sex crime can report direct to the police or anonymously to the SARC by calling 0845 456 3462.
WOMEN who have made up stories about being raped in Swindon in the past have been dealt with by the courts.

In January 2005 Kimberley Passmore was jailed for a year and in May this year Limara Crewe was ordered to do a 150 hours of community service.

Passmore, then 20, of Beatrice Street, Gorse Hill, told police she had been dragged into a field and brutally raped by a stranger.

An innocent man was questioned for 30 hours because of her claims.

Passmore later admitted concocting the whole story because she felt ashamed about having sex with a workmate behind her boyfriend's back.

Limara Crewe, also 20, of Conan Doyle Walk, Liden, sparked a five-day hunt after claiming three men of Eastern European appearance had attacked her.

Crewe, who was given a 12-month community order, admitted that she had made the story up.

The prosecution said she was ashamed about having sex with a man she met on a night out with friends.

**The park has a bad reputation and this won't help it**

FALSE rape claims have only damaged Faringdon Road Park's reputation even further.

That is the message from people who were sitting in the park yesterday afternoon after they learnt that a teenager had lied about being raped there.

"It is terrible that she made the whole thing up," said Jennie Firth, 51, of Shrivenham.

"There are quite a few problems in the park anyway and people making up false accusations isn't going to encourage those with the power to do something about improving the situation."

And student Mark Harper agreed with her.
"It is disgusting that she made the accusations," said Mark, 20.

"Faringdon Road Park has a bad reputation as it is and this isn't going to help.

"I was here for the Brunel festival at the weekend and it was great to see so many people enjoying it until after 10pm.

Teenager Rachel Evans, 19, said: "I can't believe someone would just make something like that up.

"The park is a lovely place during the day, but it does have a bit of a dodgy reputation at night.

"I walk through here a lot and when I saw the story this morning I was quite worried."

As well as condemning her actions, people wanted to make sure the teenager was punished for her actions.

June Sharp, 43, of Old Town said: "So many women who do get raped refuse to tell anyone, or go to the police because they do not think they will be believed.

"Her lies are what prevent other women, who are telling the truth, from getting justice.

"And it gives other women a bad name."

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