Fake Rape

Woman charged with fabricating story to cover her behavior

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A woman reports being raped in a Metra parking lot in Tinley Park, only to admit later that she had made it all up.

Heather Krueger lied when she told police she’d been raped Sunday evening. It was just a tale she made up so her parents wouldn't be angry.
she'd got drunk at the South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade, police said Tuesday.

The 19-year-old Tinley Park teen is charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct, Tinley Park police Chief Michael O'Connell said, while Mayor Ed Zabrocki warned the village would attempt to make Krueger pay for the wasted police time.

Initially, Krueger claimed she was sexually assaulted about 5 p.m. Sunday in the west end of the Metra parking lot at 18001 S. 80th Ave., as she returned with pals from the parade in Chicago's Beverly community, police say.

But her story unraveled Monday when police interviewed her for a second time. She finally confessed, Tinley Park police Cmdr. Pat McCain said.

"We interviewed her on Sunday, but she was tired and so we let her go home because we didn't want to be like the CIA with her," McCain said.

"We interviewed her friends and there were just too many inconsistencies; when we interviewed her again yesterday initially she was holding to her story, but the inconsistencies kept growing and growing and in the end she admitted she'd made it up.

"She'd been drinking and she was afraid to go home to her parents."

McCain said Krueger was taken to hospital and released Sunday night.

Zabrocki said he has asked O'Connell to look into how the village might recoup the costs of the investigation from Krueger.

"That's a lot of man hours that could have been better spent with people on the street," Zabrocki said.
A village ordinance passed in April last year gives authorities the right to recoup costs for investigating a dozen crimes, including filing a false police report.

An on-the-scene officer costs the taxpayer $63 an hour, and the rape investigation took an estimated 35 hours, meaning Krueger could potentially billed more than $2,200, plus court and collection costs.

The decision to charge her stands in contrast to that taken by Palos Heights police in the case of a 17-year-old girl who in Sept., 2008, falsely claimed she was raped after being kidnapped from the Harlem Avenue sandwich shop where she worked.

Though that earlier hoax prompted an investigation that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, the girl was not charged with any crime.

Speaking Tuesday about the earlier case, Palos Heights police Deputy Chief Bill Turner said the 17-year-old had hired a lawyer who advised her to refuse to answer police questions once her story came under suspicion.

Palos Heights police did not have enough evidence to charge the girl, so they cut a deal with the girl's attorney that saw her give a limited confession in return for a guarantee she would not be charged.

"Our main goal was to bring an end to the case and to reassure the community that there was not somebody still out there who had done this," Turner said.

Also speaking Tuesday, rape victim advocate Barb McCormick Somerville, manager of sexual violence and support services at the YWCA South Suburban Center in Chicago Heights, said hoaxes make it harder for real rape victims to come forward because victims "don't think they'll be believed."
Only 8 percent of rapes reported to police are unfounded, according to a 1997 FBI study, she said.

A 2006 study shows that a woman is forcibly raped every 5.7 minutes in the United States, she added.

McConnell said he didn't "want to embarrass this young woman," adding, "Whatever we do with this she's going to have to live with this for a long time."