The day they accused my gentle man of a rape he had never committed

TO BE accused of a crime you haven’t committed is terrifying. When that crime is rape, the horror is unimaginable. Family man David Hazeldene spent two nightmare days in jail before Alexandra Grantham, his wife of 25 years, was acquitted. In August, she was found guilty of making a false claim of rape - but for David and his wife Beatrice, the ordeal goes on. Here Beatrice and thompson, how one woman almost destroyed their lives.

NIGHTMARE THAT HAS TAINTED A LOVING COUPLE’S LIFE

All through our 25-year marriage, David has been a proud, solid rock of a man.

Nothing has really shaken him and I’ve always felt so safe and protected married to him.

But the day he turned up flanked by two plain clothes policemen will always be etched on my mind.

“They are my police officers,” David told me. “I’ve been arrested for assault.”

My mind grasped with what he was saying. He was involved in an assault yet there were no cuts or bruises on him. An officer told me: “We need all the clothes your husband was wearing yesterday.”

“I’m sorry but I have already washed his shirt. It’s hanging up to dry,” I told them. The officer turned to me and said: “I wish my wife was that efficient.”

The comment was loaded with sarcasm. I turned to David. His face was a deathly white and his hands shaking.

“It’s all right, Beatrice. There’s nothing to worry about,” he whispered. But I could see the fear.

“You’ll need his underpants,” barbled the other man. David went to the basket and got them out.

My cheeks burned as he fished them out. Suddenly, the terrible truth dawned on me - my husband was being accused of rape.

I remembered watching an episode of The Bill where a man accused of rape had his underpants taken by the police. Except this wasn’t a TV drama. This was real.

I stared at David in disbelief.

The fear and pain was evident on his face. “I didn’t do anything, Beatrice,” he whispered.

“This is just a terrible mistake,” he called me in a hoarse, hollow voice.

I tried to imagine what David was going through.

He was being accused and I had to wait for my husband to be questioned.

The hours ticked by but every time I called the police station, they told me he was being questioned. Then, my husband was released.

I was relieved. I tried to reassure myself that soon the police would get the truth out.

The day he had finished being questioned, David was released.

It wasn’t just over - we were accused of being a violent normal couple. The closest David and I have ever come to a brush with the law was when we had our shoes stolen.

I never doubted his innocence. I tried to reassure him that soon the police would get the truth out.

But the police never did.

The accusation crushed him. I don’t know what I was more scared of - his lies or seeing my husband so devastated. He even talked of suicide. He told me if I believed this he’d be on the other side.

I had to remain strong even though I was falling apart inside.

For the first time in our marriage, the roles were reversed.

The accuser was in prison. I was the one who felt raped by this whole terrifying experience.

I just want that woman to feel the pain and anger she put us through. It’s time that she paid for her crime.