Police decry false report of sexual assault

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The U Police Department has determined that a reported rape last week was nothing more than a teenage girl crying wolf.

On Tuesday, U Police were notified that a 16-year-old girl was suspected to be the victim of a rape the day before near the Residence Halls. That afternoon, Housing and Residential Education put out a campuswide emergency alert that a light blue car, parked on Fort Douglas Boulevard between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., was suspected to have been the location of the rape, based on the girl's account.

U Police say the girl had consensual sex after skipping school and made up a rape story to avoid getting in trouble—undermining the experiences of real rape victims. “Rape is a very ugly, violent crime which law enforcement and the community take very seriously,” said Capt. Lynn Mitchell of the U Police. “However, there are many fraudulent reports of rape each year.”

According to the U Campus Safety Report, about six sexual assaults occur on campus each year. But this wasn’t one of them.
“The juvenile victim did in fact have physical evidence showing that she had recent sex, but the story had loopholes and inconsistencies,” Mitchell said. U Police began to suspect she hadn’t been honest with them, he said. After further questioning, the juvenile admitted the sex was consensual.

U Police closed the case for being unfounded.

According to the police, the girl and three of her friends skipped school and came to the U to see a friend. They visited their friend for 15 minutes before the girl and one of the friends she came with left to go home. Before leaving, the girl and her 16-year-old friend had sex.

The next day, the principal of the girl’s high school called her to his office to talk about the absence the previous day. In an apparent attempt to deflect the tension, the girl told the principal that she had been raped, according to the U Police. “The principal correctly called law enforcement, which started the ball rolling,” Mitchell said. The girl said this occurred on campus, so the local detective alerted the U Police, who in turn told HRE.

It’s not the first time U Police have been notified of a sexual assault, only to find out there was nothing to it. On Oct. 25, a woman claimed to have been raped while she was a patient at the U Hospital. As it turned out, she made it up, according to U Police.

When women falsely claim to have been raped, it does a great disservice to women who actually have been raped, Mitchell said.

Sometimes it’s to avoid trouble or out of revenge.

“It’s more complex and complicated than a simple false report,” said Debra Daniels, director of the U Women’s Resource Center.

Women who make false claims of sexual assault should still be consulted about what is going on in their life that would prompt them to do so—for instance, the teenage girl from last week. According to the police, she skipped school to go drinking with her friends and have sex, issues that might need to be asked about, Daniels said.
The U Police probably won't press charges against the girl for making a false sexual assault report, since she didn't pin it on a specific person, Mitchell said.

According to the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault, rape is still one of the most underreported crimes in Utah. It's a serious offense that still needs to be treated and reported as a serious matter every time, Mitchell said.

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2 comments

TnT

Saying that you were raped when you really weren't is outrageous, those girls don't understand the hardships that they caused people and peoples families. Innocent people were accused of the rape in order to get to the bottom of the investigation and those girls don't realize that. They should be punished for there actions and their poor judgment. These are the flaws in our legal system that punish those who are innocent. What if the young men were persecuted for some dumb girls false report, I am appalled by this.

Nicolas Martin

We shouldn't coddle men who demolish the lives of women they rape, and we shouldn't coddle women who demolish the lives of men by falsely accusing them of rape or sexual assault. No matter what is going on in their life (sic) that would prompt them to rape or make a false accusation, they should be prosecuted and imprisoned. It's time to treat a false rape accusation "as a serious matter every time."