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"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." (Edmund Burke)

A HAMPSHIRE TEENAGER, falsely accused of indecent assault, has had his conviction quashed and his name removed from the sex offenders' register after a 20-second court hearing. An 11-year-old girl had accused him and her brother of abusing her when he was just 14. He was convicted at Southampton Youth Court in April 2006 on her false evidence, received a nine-month supervision order, and placed on the sex offenders' register. His mother then kicked him out of the family home, condemning him to two years in care. However, the girl's story began to fall apart last summer and she finally admitted she had made it up to get her brother into trouble. She was charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice, and was handed an 18-month sentence, but earlier this month the Appeal Court overturned the sentence, replacing it with 18 months' supervision as an 'act of mercy to the troubled family'. Judge Gabriel Moss QC said the judge had been right to be condemnatory of her conduct, but she was a child whose situation required support and not punishment. The boy's five-year nightmare ended when the prosecution said they were not opposing his appeal against conviction. CPS lawyer Sarah Dineley said the prosecution did not contest the appeal. The people involved in the case can't be named for legal reasons.

ONE DELIGHTED SAFARI READER has written to us to confirm he had just been awarded parole, and confirming the reasons given by the Parole Board. Reasons included the fact that he *agreed* to attend the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme as requested by the prison (he did not actually attend the course because those maintaining innocence automatically do not *qualify* for attendance), he had no warnings or adjudications, he had attended various educational courses including "Sex and relationships" (which he *would* have qualified for) and Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS). The reader was especially pleased at the Parole Board's decision as both inside *and* outside Probation recommended *against* parole because of the lack of 'offence-related work'.

ERIN CASSON is facing jail after being found guilty of making a false accusation of rape against a former lover, Brian Eaton. The court was told the pair broke up three months earlier after a 12-month relationship because she suspected him of cheating on her. Casson, a Royal Navy Wren, had met Petty Officer Brian Eaton for a sex session three months after they broke up, but then told another man she had been raped. Brian was arrested, and was the subject of a six-month investigation before the case was dropped. CCTV footage from a Tesco garage showed the pair laughing and joking, while neighbours remembered Casson and Brian enjoying some 'light-hearted banter' before entering the house. Casson was found guilty of perverting the course of justice, after jury deliberation of less than an hour.

GRAEME McCOMBIE, who was falsely accused of rape by former school mate Jenna Lindsay after they'd had consensual sex at a gathering of friends, has told how the allegation affected him. He said: "I know she admitted she lied, but I still worry about people talking about me. I will never, ever forget it and I will never forgive Jenna for what she has done. If I had been convicted, I would have been put in prison, put on the sex offenders' register and had my life ruined for something I hadn't done."

Sheriff Kevin Veal ordered that Lindsay spend 60 days in prison, saying there was a need to "send out a strong public message that such conduct will not be tolerated". Even that was overturned at appeal, being replaced by a two-year probation order. So much for the 'strong public message'.

GEMMA CAPON, 19, has pled guilty to a charge of wasting police time, after falsely accusing her ex-fiancé, Graham Tysoe, of rape. Capon had thrown Graham out of their flat (after being told he had kissed another girl) before making the false allegation. Graham was questioned over the rape claim for nearly 24 hours, but was then released after police confronted Capon about discrepancies in her story, and she admitted lying.

PAUL DRANE had his conviction, for inflicting grievous bodily harm, quashed on appeal. Paul was originally ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work after being found guilty of attacking someone at a pub in Dawlish. Paul said he had acted in self-defence but was convicted by the jury. At the appeal, Lord Justice Latham, sitting with Mr Justice Grigson and Judge Michael Pert at London's Criminal Appeal Court, agreed with submissions from Paul's legal team that his conviction was 'unsafe' and should be overturned, pointing to flaws in the trial judge's directions to the jury on the issue of self defence. Lord Justice Latham said: "It seems to me that the judge simply did not give a substantial direction and it is a pity that it was not spotted earlier."

WITNESS ANONYMITY: Tighter rules on when witnesses can claim anonymity in court have been issued to try and ensure that defendants are not subject to unfair trials because they do not know the identity of witnesses and therefore cannot produce evidence that the witness is lying. This is good news for justice because it means people falsely accused are not to be hindered by having their accusers hide behind a mask of anonymity. The original rules on anonymity of witnesses were introduced to protect those giving evidence who were fearful for their safety, but witnesses may now only seek anonymity if they can show a "reasonable fear of injury or death or damage to property". It is expected that the new guidelines will lead to some prosecutions being dropped. Prosecutors will also have to be satisfied that the police have evidence to support the witness's concerns.

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ISOBEL THOMPSON AND IAIN CAMPBELL have been prosecuted for perverting the course of justice and given suspended prison sentences. Thompson claimed she had been punched in the face and kicked on the ankle by Kevin Scanlon, and Campbell supported the allegation, saying he had helped her away from the scene and that she had been badly injured. They persisted in the story by making witness statements to police; Kevin was arrested by the police and interviewed. He was kept in custody for about five hours and then subject to police bail for almost two weeks.

Further investigations brought up CCTV footage, which showed that Thompson, Campbell, Kevin Scanlon and Kevin's girlfriend had been chatting outside the pub door. An argument appeared to have followed between Mr Scanlon and Thompson, during which *she* lost her temper and slapped *him*. He then walked away with his girlfriend. After being arrested, Campbell told police he had heard a commotion at the door and had seen Thompson on the floor, with Mr Scanlon standing over her and his girlfriend pushing him away. Campbell said he was sure he had not deliberately lied in his statement, but in parts, he may have been mistaken. Thompson told police she believed she had been slapped and assumed it was Kevin Scanlon. She had hurt her ankle at the scene. The prosecution said that, on the following morning, she had tried to piece together what had taken place and came up with the story that Kevin Scanlon was responsible. She accepted that it was a lie. Both were given six months prison sentences, suspended for a year and 12 months supervision.

STUART CECIL WABY (53) has been given a community order after having called the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children claiming that another man had abused a minor under the age of 10. He also told the NSPCC call-taker that the man had downloaded sexually explicit images from the Internet and shown them to the child. Both claims were totally untrue. He made the allegations against a man who cannot be named for legal reasons. The court heard that Waby had made the call from a phone box, believing it to be anonymous. The NSPCC forwarded the call to both social services and the police headquarters. The child was interviewed by police on the basis of Waby's lies, and therefore subjected to wholly unnecessary trauma, and the man and his wife have also been deeply affected by the allegation which was completely and totally untrue.

THE CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB) appears to have falsely accused hundreds of people applying to take up jobs as teachers, nurses, child-minders and even those volunteering to work with youth groups. The agency wrongly found that hundreds of people had criminal records, and in other cases gave a clean bill of health to people who actually *did* have a criminal record. The Conservative Party said that stopping innocent people working with children was "completely unacceptable", and that the CRB needed an urgent overhaul. David Ruffley, a shadow Home Office Minister, said: "There were almost 700 mistakes that could ruin people's lives. That is 700 too many. There is an emerging crisis of public confidence in the handling of this public information. These appalling delays are unacceptable, causing havoc for organisations desperate to take on volunteers or employees." The Home Office admitted that innocent people had been mistakenly branded as criminals, and said this was "regrettable".

PAROLE BOARD NEWS: SAFARI attended the Parole Board's Stakeholder Event on 21st July 2008. The Parole Board took the opportunity to launch the Annual Report and Accounts for 2007/08, and we were given an update on the evolving Intensive Case Management initiative.

The Annual Report and Accounts included the fact that in January 2008 a seminar was held at Grenadier House, jointly hosted with Bruce Kent from PPMI (Progressing Prisoners Maintaining Innocence), on the subject of prisoners who maintain their innocence. It was attended by senior delegates from the Howard League and NOMS (National Offender Management Service), as well as solicitors, academics and Parole Board members with a special interest in the subject, and was also addressed by Dr Michael Naughton. Differences did emerge, but there was also a meeting of minds on many issues, and there is every prospect that real changes will take place, both at the Board and more widely within NOMS, as a result.

One of the issues raised by SAFARI was included in nine issues to be discussed by the delegates, namely why there had been a drop in the number of successful applications by prisoners maintaining innocence from 2006 to 2008. SAFARI wanted the Parole Board to consider whether parole applicants in 2008 were really 'more risky' than those in 2006 or whether those making the decisions were just less happy to release those people falling into this category.

SAFARI MET WITH EDWARD GARNIER, Shadow Minister for Justice at Westminster on Tuesday 1st July, and outlined concerns with the functioning of the investigation and legal systems. We addressed issues arising from adversarial trials and target-driven investigations resulting in systemic flaws, where a 'success' is defined as a conviction, rather than as a *correct* result. We discussed defects in the system which encourage false allegations in the first place, and later flaws in the processes of investigation, trial, prison and appeals procedures which make it hard, if not impossible, for the innocent to achieve justice. Mr Garnier went away from this meeting with notes of all these points, and promised to get back to SAFARI at a later stage, with the hope that we can build on this meeting to implement productive discussions with the Conservatives, who may well form the next Government, to protect innocent victims of false allegations.

JOHN BOYLE HAS HOPE for compensation. John was jailed for 12 years, 25 years ago, for 'possessing a gun and being a member of the IRA'. The CCRC became involved in 1999, and an independent expert said scientific tests on police interview notes revealed they had been re-written. The secretary of state refused to award compensation but Lord Chief Justice Sir Brian Kerr has ruled that the rewritten notes met the 'serious default' threshold to qualify for the ex gratia compensation scheme.

SAFARI e-Petitions: Please get everyone you know with Internet access to sign our on-line Government ePetitions. Please visit:

<http://safari-uk.org>

..to view all our ePetitions.

Thanks to Terry McCarthy (Parole Board for England and Wales) for supplying us with the statistics of those granted release on Parole despite maintaining innocence.

Figures for month of June 2008

<i>Non-lifers:</i>			
All offences	8	of 44	18.2%
Rape	5	of 19	26.3%
Indecent Assault	2	of 7	28.6%
Other Sex	0	of 1	0.0%
Violence	0	of 2	0.0%
Property	0	of 1	0.0%
Drugs	0	of 2	0.0%
Others	1	of 12	8.3%
Total Sex	7	of 27	25.9%
Total Non Sex	1	of 17	5.9%
<i>Lifers only</i>	0	of 0	n/a

[There were no lifer applications this month]