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NEW GOVERNMENT, NEW START. We now have in Britain a new Coalition Government, made up of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The Labour Government, who were responsible for all the bad laws introduced in the last 13 years, have been thrown out by the voters.

Conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, has appointed Liberal Democrat leader, Nick Clegg, as Deputy Prime Minister. Nick made a very positive speech on 19th May 2010.

When this newsletter was being prepared in mid-May, we were working on an article about putting pressure on the new Government finally to reverse the legal decisions that negatively affect the falsely accused. Boy did they act fast! Even before we got a chance to go to print, Nick Clegg's speech detailed major positive reforms to the political system. And we mean major! The parts that directly affect SAFARI and our supporters follow:

Nick said: *"This Government is going to transform our politics so the state has far less control over you, and you have far more control over the state. This Government is going to break up concentrations of power and hand power back to people, because that is quite simply how we can build a society that is fair.*

We will repeal all of the intrusive and unnecessary laws that inhibit your freedom. We will reform our politics so it is open, transparent, decent. We will radically redistribute power away from the centre, into your communities, your homes, your hands.

Take citizens' rights: eroded by the quiet proliferation of laws that increase surveillance, quash dissent, limit freedom. Take executive authority: consistently increased by successive administrations to the point that we now have a neutered parliament and Government that enjoys almost untrammelled control - over precisely the people who are meant to keep it in check.

It is time for a wholesale, big bang approach to political reform. That's what this Government will deliver.

This Government will end the culture of spying on its citizens. It is outrageous that decent, law-abiding people are regularly treated as if they have something to hide. It has to stop.

So there will be no ID card scheme. No national identity register, a halt to second-generation biometric passports.

We won't hold your Internet and eMail records when there is just no reason to do so.

CCTV will be properly regulated, as will the DNA database, with restrictions on the storage of innocent people's DNA.

Britain must not be a country where our children grow up so used to their liberty being infringed that they accept it without question.

There will be no ContactPoint children's database.

This will be a Government that is proud when British citizens stand up against illegitimate advances of the state. That values debate, that is unafraid of dissent.

That's why we'll remove limits on the rights to peaceful protest. It's why we'll review libel laws so that we can better protect freedom of speech.

*And as we tear through the statute book, we'll do something no Government ever has: We will ask you which laws you think should go. Because thousands of criminal offences were **created** under the previous Government.*

Taking people's freedom away didn't make our streets safe. Obsessive lawmaking simply makes criminals out of ordinary people. So we'll get rid of the unnecessary laws, and once they're gone, they won't come back. We will introduce a mechanism to block pointless new criminal offences. If your MP is corrupt, you will be able to sack them.

Unlike the previous Labour Government, we're not insecure about relinquishing control. But this new Government, this new kind of Government, creates an enormous opportunity for those of us who have spent our lives fighting for political reform. Power will be yours. That is new politics."

Wow. It appears that we now have a Government which is actually prepared to *listen* to the people who voted them in. And about time too.

The new Government is giving all those negatively affected by false allegations a major opportunity to achieve important and powerful changes to the legal system. We need to embrace the opportunity. For the first time ever, the SAFARI newsletter now goes electronically to almost every MP in Parliament. That's nearly 650 people, the majority of whom *want* change and *want* to give the people of this country the power to achieve it.

So where do we go from here? Well, we need to remember that most of the problems in the system *now* were put there by the previous Government. They're not the fault of the *new* Government so now's the time to give them a chance to prove that their words actually *mean* something.

The Government say that their legislative programme is to be based upon the principles of **freedom**, **fairness** and **responsibility**. If they really mean that – and we think they do – then we are entering a new age when the problems of false accusations are going to be dramatically reduced.

Governments often feel that they need to defend their actions, which is why it's so hard to achieve change but now we have a new Government, they will not wish to defend the errors of the previous one!

So the time for complaining about the current system is over. Now it's time to work *with* the new Government to achieve change. And justice. For all.

YOUR TASK FOR THIS MONTH is to take advantage of the changes in Government and write to **your** MP.

If they are Conservative or Liberal Democrat, *congratulate* them on taking power and ask them *specifically* to do whatever is necessary to protect falsely accused people, by changing the law to make it impossible to convict an innocent person just because a jury could be *convinced* by the prosecution, despite no evidence except for someone's word being available, **and** to make it easier for those already wrongly convicted on this basis to have their convictions overturned.

If they are in any other party, ask them to work *with* the new Government to achieve the same.

As you receive replies, forward copies to us at SAFARI. We'll use these to decide which MPs are best placed to work more closely with us all to achieve the necessary changes.

Have your say in policy decisions. Get your friends and family to visit this web site to add your views.:

<http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/justice/>

They say they will listen to you!

KAY HOOFE HAS BEEN JAILED for six months after admitting making a false rape claim. Hoofe had actually had consensual sex but had then claimed she had been raped so that the father of her two youngest children might get back together with her.

FAYE BRANIGHAN HAS BEEN SENTENCED to eight months in a young offenders' institution for making fictitious reports of rape. She told police that a man had pushed her into her house on Waterloo Road, then raped her in the sitting room, and then that she had then stayed at home for the rest of the day - but CCTV from the shops on the street where she lived showed her chatting and consuming alcohol with another female at a shop in the late afternoon.

GAIL SHERWOOD HAS BEEN SENTENCED to two years in prison for falsely claiming she had been abducted and raped, and also for accusing a man of stalking her. As part of the investigation, police installed covert CCTV outside her house, which proved that she had not been abducted, but had left by herself. Judge Julian Lambert said: "Within a tortured mind you created a malicious lie. You deliberately wrongly identified a man as your stalker. Gratified by the attention you received you went on to make up a rapist. You have shown yourself to be cunning and deceitful."

ANONYMITY IN RAPE CASES is to be given to defendants. The new Government is finally extending anonymity to those accused rather than just to those making the accusation. This is great news and we will be asking the Government to take this further by extending anonymity to *all* defendants in *all* cases - not just rape cases - so that innocent people's names are no longer destroyed in newspaper stories.

ONE READER ASKED about the likelihood of having to restart their time in prison if an appeal fails; this is extremely rare (in fact we don't know of a single case) but it is certainly possible. The only way this can be done, though, is if "the Court is of the opinion that the application for permission to appeal is *plainly without merit*" in which case "an order may be made that time spent in custody *as an appellant* shall not count towards sentence." So we advise you to ensure there is "merit" in your application. e.g. appealing solely on the basis that the jury got the decision wrong is not enough!

POLICE QUITE RIGHTLY have shut down a 'name and shame' web site operated by activist Chris Wittwer which aimed to publish the details of people on the sex offenders' register, despite a Government decision not to allow wholesale access to the register. The site was shut down because of fears it could lead to vigilante attacks. And of course, from SAFARI's perspective, this also means those already falsely accused will not be targeted a second time by vigilantes. It must be remembered that in the UK, roughly 99% of those on the register report to police as required which makes 're-offending' of the guilty very unlikely. In the USA where the register is publically available under "Megan's Law", a large number of people fail to report as required and just 'disappear' for fear of vigilante attacks.

SEX OFFENDERS REGISTER: Lifetime registration has now been ruled illegal, and incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in Scotland, closely following the same decision in England. The High Court has made a 'declaration of incompatibility', which requires Parliament to amend the law to allow offenders to prove they may no longer present a risk. It must be remembered, of course, that this only means they can apply and try to demonstrate why they would not be a 'high risk' of committing a sexual offence - they might be refused permission. SAFARI will be offering our advice to the new Government on ways to improve the law on this issue.

SELF-HELP BOOKS can 'convince women that they were victims of child sex abuse' according to Dr Jo Woodiwiss, a senior lecturer from the University of Huddersfield. She said that women could come to believe that they had blocked the memories from their minds after reading the books. Dr Woodiwiss said that the books also encouraged women to look inward and to their past to explain problems in their adult life. She said that many offered 'checklists' of so-called symptoms of past abuse and "These checklists are so wide that a significant number of the questions could be checked by all of us. So when women talk about having recovered memories they are not necessarily talking about recovering a concrete memory of being sexually abused. They are often talking about identifying symptoms, which they interpret as evidence of sexual abuse in childhood." Dr Woodiwiss is the author of a book, 'Contesting Stories of Childhood Sexual Abuse' (ISBN 0230574041) which carried out in-depth interviews with 11 women who had in adulthood come to believe that they had been abused as children and who had all read this type of self-help book.

WHEN GIVING SOLICITORS written instructions, include one that they *must not* make any representations on your behalf without approving them with you first. This will help ensure that they will not act *against* your interests or, if they do, then you'll have grounds for suing them for doing so.

JUDICIAL REVIEW is a procedure in English administrative law by which the courts supervise the exercise of public power on the application of an individual.

A person who feels that an exercise of such power by a Government authority, such as a minister, the local council or a statutory tribunal, is unlawful, perhaps because it has violated his or her rights, may apply to the Administrative Court (a division of the High Court) for judicial review of the decision, and have it set aside (quashed) and possibly obtain damages. A court may also make mandatory orders or injunctions to compel the authority to do its duty or to stop it from acting illegally. To apply for a judicial review you need to complete form N461. This can be found online at:

<http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/courtfinder/forms/N461.pdf>

...or by post at Her Majesty's Courts Service Headquarters, Customer Service Unit, Post point 1.40, 1st Floor, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ.
