

# Woman charged in false report

■ **City woman, 19, is indicted. Police say she fabricated story that she was raped near eatery.**

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THE FREE LANCE-STAR

A young Fredericksburg woman was indicted yesterday on a charge that she made up a story about being raped by a stranger while being held down by two other men.

Brandy Amber Higley, 19, is charged with filing a false police report, a Class 1 misdemeanor.

According to police documents, Higley reported that she was walking up wooden steps to leave Buffalo Mo's restaurant on Sophia Street June 24 when two men approached her.

She said they followed her a short distance down Sophia Street before pulling her into an alley.

A third man then appeared and raped her while the other two held her arms and covered her eyes,

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according to her report.

The woman said she didn't know her attackers but had seen them earlier in the evening. She described real people she had seen that night at the restaurant, police said.

Her boyfriend called police after she got to his home and told him what had happened.

Police found the three men and questioned them several times. The men steadfastly denied that anything had happened; they were never charged.

The woman was examined at Mary Washington Hospital after the alleged incident, but no evidence of a sexual assault was found, police said.

Police said Higley later became uncooperative and missed several appointments with investigators.

Finally, police said, she admitted earlier this month that she made up the story as part of an effort to "get back at" her boyfriend for something.

Prosecutor Phil Fines said the crime report had a big impact. He said the three suspects and the restaurant suffered, along with people in the community who became afraid to go into that part of downtown.

In addition, Fines pointed out that the Fredericksburg Police Department spent numerous hours investigating.

Fines said his office had decided to charge Higley weeks ago but decided it was more prudent to wait until the grand jury met.

Now the case goes straight to circuit court, where it would have ended up anyway if Higley had appealed a lower court conviction.