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False rape claim cost force £67,000

A woman who cried rape and got an innocent stranger arrested cost a hard-up police force £67,000, a court heard.

Moira Waugh's concocted story came as a town's women were living in fear of a serial rapist and no stone was left unturned, York Crown Court was told.

Mother-of-two Waugh, 30, of Herford Close, Eastfield, Scarborough admitted acts intending to pervert the course of justice and was jailed for 15 months.

She was told by Judge Alan Goldsack QC: "It was a wicked thing because the man you picked out was innocent and you knew it. Rape is a very serious offence and so is making false allegations."

Prosecutor Simon Kealey said Waugh had been to a nightclub in Scarborough and later told her partner she had been raped on the way home.

The complaint was reported to North Yorkshire police, he added, and an investigation sprang into action because there was already a fear locally that a serial attacker was around.

Mr Kealey said: "Any allegation of rape is one which must be investigated and Waugh, who maintained her story for two months, cost the police in time and manpower £67,000."

He said the day after the unfounded attack Waugh and her partner travelled around the streets of Scarborough looking for the man responsible and she purported to identify her assailant.

Mr Kealey said an innocent man was arrested as a result, but the CCTV video taken at the nightclub door proved he was in the clear, and was, in fact, at home at the time.

"She had been caught out, but it wasn't until some time had elapsed that she summoned up the courage to tell the police was really happened."

Taryn Turner, for Waugh, said she still maintained she had been raped. But she accepted totally she had picked out the wrong man who just happened to be walking along the street.

She agreed Waugh had set the police machine in motion and that there was no stopping it particularly in view that they were hunting a real serial rapist at the time.

"Whether her claim of rape is true or false, she is traumatised by the events. She knows she has done wrong and thinks she needs help and support."

Miss Turner said: "A man was arrested and interviewed but, fortunately, it was short lived."

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