

Rape, Sex Crimes and the Media

Friday, 15 August 2008

A copy of my letter to the Guardian after a very good feature by a rape victim today 15/8/8.

I thought your G2 article (sadly anonymous) NOW HE CAN'T HURT ANYONE ELSE, was excellent. Nobody could fail to sympathise and feel pleased that, in her experience, apart from the initial attack, everything went as it should.

But I have to tell you, from my personal experience, this is just one side of the coin. The false allegations industry is exploding. The law and the police encourage accusations which can, and often do, lead to innocent men and women being convicted of sex crimes.

I do believe it is vital that both sides are fairly covered and examined. It is so easy for the media to believe that a good story is only one extreme or another. The public - being busy, occupied and without either the time or the inclination to examine grey areas - want victims and perpetrators. Anything in between is too complicated and not a good story.

I found it frightening when it dawned on me that, in my case, the police didn't want the truth, they wanted a conviction.

I told them everything, foolishly, assuming that it would help them find the truth. I didn't want them on my side. I wanted them on the side of truth.

Rape is a very emotive word and does, these days, encompass areas which may well not have been considered rape only a few years ago. So does the word Paedophile.

I genuinely believe that it needs an entire issue of G2 - or possibly a serious Saturday section - to examine all aspects of this subject - sexual crimes. Are they always crimes? Do people make things up? Do they (far more common) exaggerate and inflate? If so, why?

Misunderstandings can easily become crimes in the telling. The entire area of drink and drugs needs more perceptive examination - nobody should justify someone being forced to do something against their will, but what about when the influences of alcohol or chemicals provokes desire later regretted and, genuinely, therefore forgotten?

There is so little responsible media coverage of this subject. It's either