

# *We could do halve the amount of rape<sup>1</sup>*

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Everyone knows the facts. A large number of women are raped. A small number report the crime to the police. Many of these decide not to proceed with a prosecution. When there is a prosecution nearly everyone gets off. So rape is a pretty safe crime to commit.

And everybody knows why this is. The victims are shocked and traumatized. They are more concerned with survival than revenge. They are terrified of the further trauma of giving evidence. They are afraid, rightly, that their identity will be disclosed by the press, whatever the law says. They are afraid, rightly, that their sexual history will be disclosed in court, whatever the law says. Police interrogation is insensitive. Police often think “She was probably drunk,” or “The way she was dressed, she was asking for it.” So few cases are prosecuted. And very few prosecutions are successful. It is extraordinarily difficult to prove that there was no consent. Judges ignore the law and are biased against women who may have been drinking, or who dressed in a way that would excite a 50-year old judge.

So some change in the system is needed. What?

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Most rapes are committed by multiple rapists. No doubt some people try it once, dislike the experience and give it up. Most find it exciting, see it is quite safe, and try it again, and again.

This means that policing should target the multiple rapists, not treat each rape as a one-off incident. The first step is to keep a national database of people accused. It must be national because many rapists move out of their area.

The second step is to campaign for everyone who has been raped or nearly raped to report the incident. Just report it. This gets a name or the DNA onto a database, and the database will have a dozen times as many names as it has now. Many victims will not want to go any further than provide a statement and DNA. Fine.

It will rapidly become clear that the same names, the same DNA, the same modus operandi keep appearing. Suddenly the police do not have to treat each rape as a one off. If there is an attack, they can immediately question local rapists – including people not on the sex offenders register. And they can do snap searches of someone who has repeatedly been accused of using date rape drugs.

And of course prosecution becomes easier. Instead of a difficult case where lack of consent is impossible to prove, and a misreading of the signs is a valid defence, the rapist faces six charges of similar rapes. They can't all have given consent. Most rapists will plead guilty to one of the offences in return for a reduced sentence.

Women who will not face the stress and humiliation of an unsuccessful prosecution, may well join with others, knowing they are not alone, and knowing that they have a very good chance of getting a conviction.

A cheap proposal. An effective system. And, yes, it works for paedophiles as well.