

I WAS RAPED, BUT POLICE TREATED ME LIKE A LIAR

COMPLAINT: Anita
Grimham complained
about how Suffolk
police handled her
rape claim in 2008
Picture: GREGG BROWN

Force rapped for failings in investigation

EXCLUSIVE

BY LIZZIE PARRY

lizzie.parry@guardian.co.uk

PSYCH: I was made to feel like a liar.

Those are the words of an alleged rape victim who today told of the devastation caused by the police's mishandling of the investigation into the incident.

Anita Grimham, 37, spoke out following the publication of a report into Suffolk

Constabulary's inquiry, which uncovered a series of failings including:

- vital forensic opportunities were missed
- key witnesses were not interviewed correctly
- searches of the suspect's

home and car were not conducted

- the officer in charge of the case had no specific training in handling investigations of sexual offences.

Miss Grimham said: "I was violated in the most horrendous way. "Someone raped me and no one's been punished. But I was made to feel like a liar."

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FULL
STORY
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Sorry isn't good enough

Someone raped me and no-one's been punished, says mum as police are criticised over investigation

EXCLUSIVE

BY LIZZIE PARRY

IPSWICH: A number of serious failings by Suffolk police in their investigations of an allegation of rape can today be revealed – as the alleged victim says “sorry” is not good enough.

A report found vital forensic opportunities were missed, key witnesses were not interviewed correctly, searches of the suspect's home and car were not carried out and the officer in charge of the case had no specific training in handling investigations of sexual offences.

But today Det Ch Supt Andy Henwood, of Suffolk police, told the Star a new structure is in place for rape investigations and reassured people “allegations of rape are always taken seriously”.

Anita Grinham, 37, from the Ipswich area, said she was made to feel like a liar after telling police she had been raped after her drink was spiked on a night out in Ipswich in July 2008.

Five weeks after the ordeal, the mum-of-four, terrified and scared for her life, found the courage to report what had happened to police.

Officers made an arrest but she was told the Crown



Police issue apology to alleged date rape victim

MY WHOLE LIFE HAS CHANGED: Anita Grinham says her allegations were not taken seriously by the police. Left, how the Star first reported the story

Picture: GREGG BROWN

My life stopped when I was raped. I have spent all my time since then trying to get justice

Anita Grinham

Prosecution Service could not take the matter to court due to the lack of forensic evidence.

After making a complaint to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), Miss Grinham was informed in May 2010 that Suffolk Constabulary's professional standards department would review the handling of the investigation. Last June her complaint was upheld.

Showing the report to the Star for the first time, Miss Grinham, who waived her right to anonymity, said the

force's failings made her feel like she was being branded a liar. It states: “Specifically, forensic opportunities were not considered, telephone evidence not sought, key witnesses not interviewed regarding the connected harassment incident, or re-interviewed in the case of the female acquaintances who had been with the complainant prior to the alleged rape.”

“Equally, searches of the suspect's home or the car used were not carried out, neither was he re-interviewed after conflicting accounts were obtained from the witnesses.”

While revealing the officer who interviewed Miss Grinham did have training to deal with rape inquiries, the report states the officer in charge of the investigation had “no specialist training regarding the investigation of sexual offences”.

The publication of the report comes as national watchdogs this week criticised police in England and Wales for failing to spot links between sex attacks and for not identifying rapists early enough.

The Inspectorate of Constabularies and the Crown Prosecution Service inspectorate criticised the number of allegations of rape closed as a “no crime” in some forces, in a joint report.

Miss Grinham said: “I know what happened to me, I was violated in the most horrendous way.”

“Someone raped me and no one's been punished. But I was made to feel like a liar.”

“My whole life has changed. I went from being bubbly and outgoing to being paranoid and scared.”

“I lost my business, I suffer from panic attacks, depression and was diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder.”

“Sorry is not good enough. My life stopped when I was raped. I have spent all my time since then trying to get justice. I just hope what I have been through helps change things for other victims.”

What do you think? Write to Your Letters, Ipswich Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AN or e-mail starletters@archant.co.uk
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the ferns

■ In November 2010, The Ferns, a sexual assault referral centre, opened.

■ Victims of both sexes are offered a medical examination, and counselling without an obligation to report the incident to police.

■ The centre runs alongside the Suffolk Rape

Crisis service, in partnership with Suffolk police, NHS Suffolk, NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney, Suffolk County Council and the Crown Prosecution Service and Victim Support.

■ For more information visit their website at www.theferns-suffolk.org.uk

Specialist team now in place

SUFFOLK police today said a new team has been created to help support those reporting rape allegations.

Det Ch Supt Andy Henwood said recommendations made by the professional standard's department have assisted with the new structure for rape investigations.

“Suffolk Constabulary has created a county wide Gemini Team with specialist rape-trained officers who work with the victim from the outset to ensure they receive the best possible support, advice and guidance. They follow

national protocol and best practice compiled from forces throughout the country,” he said. “This matter has been referred to the IPCC and as such we cannot comment on this any further.”

“However, we will work closely with the IPCC and the victim to implement any further recommendations that are put to us.”

“We would like to take this opportunity to reassure residents that allegations of rape are always taken seriously and thoroughly investigated by Suffolk police.”

In brief

Investigation continues after body found

IPSWICH: An investigation continues after a woman's body was found under the Orwell Bridge. At about 1.10pm on Tuesday officers were called to the Strand side of the river after a body was discovered. Officers cordoned off the area as they examined the body and the scene. Speaking yesterday, a spokesman for Suffolk police said the investigation was ongoing.

He said the death of the woman, who was in her 50s, is being treated as unexplained and is not believed to be suspicious. An inquest had not yet been opened and adjourned into her death.

Step back in time with dinosaur star show

IPSWICH: A star extravaganza with a prehistoric difference takes place at a town museum next weekend. The Dinosaur Star Show at Ipswich Museum on Saturday, March 10 offers visitors the chance to step inside a unique planetarium for an incredible journey back in time. Admission is £1.50 and must be booked in advance. Shows are at 10.15am, 11.15am, 12.15pm, 2.15pm and 3.15pm. See www.dinosaurs.org.uk for details.

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By Emily Andrews

A MOTHER has told how her life was left in ruins after police made her feel like a liar when she reported being raped.

Anita Grinham told officers she was sexually assaulted in her own home by a man who had spiked her drink in a nightclub.

But she says the detectives did not take her allegations seriously and sided with her attacker.

Her claims were backed up by an internal inquiry that found key witnesses were not interviewed and the suspect's house and car were left unsearched.

Although a suspect was arrested, the case did not reach court through lack of forensic evidence - another failing in the police investigation.

Miss Grinham, who has waived her anonymity to detail her ordeal, said her life was in ruins despite being vindicated by an apology from Suffolk police.

'I know what happened to me - I was violated in the most horrendous way,' said the 37-year-old mother of four.

'Sorry is not good enough'

'Someone raped me and no one's been punished. But I was made to feel like a liar. My whole life has changed. I went from being bubbly and outgoing to being paranoid and scared.'

'Because of this horrendous experience I lost my business. I now suffer from panic attacks, depression and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.'

'Sorry is not good enough. My life stopped when I was raped. Miss Grinham was attacked on a night out with friends in her home town of Ipswich in July 2008 to celebrate the opening of a salon she had set up.

Because she was driving, she bought only one glass of wine which she asked a doorman to look after while she went to the lavatory. 'I vaguely knew this guy, as I had seen him in my local gym and I thought as a doorman he would be responsible,' she said. 'After I finished my drink I started

Police made me feel like a liar when I reported being raped

Victim's anguish at blunders by officers



Anita Grinham, Waived her right to anonymity

to feel very peculiar - my legs felt funny and my friends said we should go home.

Apparently this doorman offered to drive my car home, as I felt awful and my friends had had too much to drink. The next thing I remember is waking up and he was on top of me.

'I wanted to scream and scream but nothing would come out of my mouth - It was as if I was paralysed.'

Miss Grinham said her attacker later warned her not to do anything stupid after the incident.

She defied his threats and reported the crime to the police five weeks later. However, the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to proceed with charges due to lack of evidence.

After making a complaint to the Independent Police Complaints

Commission, she won an apology from police last June.

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Hendwood of Suffolk Constabulary said after a review by the force's professional standards department a team of specialist officers had been set up to deal with and support rape victims.

Earlier this week a criminal justice joint inspection study criti-

cised police in England and Wales for dismissing more than one in ten rape allegations to secure a higher conviction rate and meet targets.

It warned that target cultures have put forces under pressure to keep recorded crime to a 'minimum' and that foreign rapists could be escaping justice because police are failing to check the background of suspects.