



Mandatory training for judges in domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

[Craig Whitelaw and Kristofer McLaren](#) were convicted and sentenced to 9 years in prison for the rape of an 18 year old woman in Northallerton. In sentencing, Justice Males made it clear that both men made a choice to commit rape:

But it was you, and only you, who deliberately took advantage of her condition, to take her to a dark alley to see what fun you could have with her.

'It was you who decided to treat her body as a plaything on which to act out your sordid fantasies of having a threesome.'

Yet, Justice Males prefaced these statements with the standard victim blaming:

'Your victim was very unwise to allow herself to drink so much that she became so thoroughly inebriated,' the judge said.

We regularly see similar comments by judges: Nigel Peters quoted prosecutor Robert Colover in labelling a 13 year old girl "predatory in all her actions" and gave Neil Wilson a suspended sentence for sexual assault because the girl "looked and behaved older". This despite clear evidence of grooming on the part of Wilson. Thankfully, the Attorney General's office and the Office for Judicial Complaints [listened to specialist services](#) and investigated both the prosecutor and judge.

[Judge Anthony Morris](#) made this statement in a case last year:

"These were people who were good friends of each other, close friends who spent the evening drinking quite a considerable quantity of alcohol together, at the end of which the allegation is the defendant in a drunken state took advantage of her.

"It is something which he bitterly regretted as soon as it happened and he was stopped in the course of it. Some might say to go through the process now is going to make matters worse rather than better."

He then insisted that the jury find Archie Reed not guilty despite stating that Reed had "taken advantage" of a young woman who could not consent: which is the legal definition of rape.

We also see numerous judges insisting that domestic violence is due solely to a man's ["uncontrollable temper"](#) despite the fact that this is widely recognised as a myth. Judge Patrick Eccles labeled Andrew Parsons a ["good father"](#) in the sentencing for the murder of Janee Parsons by Andrew in front of their son.

These statements aren't 'isolated incidents'. They are clear evidence of systemic victim blaming within the judiciary. In order to change this, we need mandatory specialist training for all judges



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in domestic and sexual violence and abuse, not just those working in the specialist domestic violence courts. We need an immediate influx of money into specialist domestic violence courts as they are now suffering due to austerity cuts.

We have the power to end victim blaming in domestic and sexual violence and abuse. We need to start by insisting that all judges have appropriate training - and not just the measly 12 hours of professional development annually required in England and Wales - so they can recognise domestic and sexual violence and abuse and understand that the victim is never to blame.