

TRANSCRIPT OF "FILE ON 4" – RAPE PROSECUTIONS

CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP

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SHAW: Next week, the Government unveils an ambitious £500,000 information campaign to remind young men that they need a woman's consent before sex. Proving a woman didn't agree to sex is a big problem for prosecutors – especially if the victim is too drunk to remember. Police struggle to find supporting evidence - one detective tells us they have so many cases it's like spinning plates. No wonder very few rape allegations end in conviction – fewer than 6%. Tonight on File on 4, the minister responsible tells us that new laws designed to bolster rape prosecutions aren't working and says a new legal definition of consent may be needed. Others say that's tinkering: what's required is a radically different approach in which rape victims come face-to-face with their attackers.

SIGNATURE TUNE

EMMA: I remember sitting there, staring at the phone, thinking, I'm going to have to ring the police, he's raped me, he's a friend. I just couldn't fathom it, and all I could see was him climbing on top of me and biting me and hurting me.

SHAW: These are the words of a woman from Lancashire. To protect her identity, we'll call her Emma. Like about 12,000 women in England and Wales every year, she reported being raped to the police. In Emma's case, it happened after returning with her husband and friends from a night at the pub.

EMMA: We all decided to walk home, because it's walking distance from my house. We'd all decided to have a few drinks. Unfortunately I'm one of these persons when I've had enough, I've had enough, I can't take no more. So I took myself off to bed, left everybody downstairs.

SHAW: What do you recall about what happened after you took yourself to bed?

EMMA: Well one minute I was just dozing off to go to sleep and next thing I remember is somebody sitting by the side of my bed, thinking, oh well it's my husband, he's come up to bed and everything, and the next thing I remember him being on top of me. I remember him biting me. All I know is I kept saying no, no, no and he weren't going to take that, and my sister come up and disturbed him.

SHAW: You told him to stop it and he carried on?

EMMA: Yeah, several times.. It was probably over minutes, but it seemed a lifetime, it did seem a very long time when I was laid there.

SHAW: The man was arrested and charged with rape. But it was Emma - in the police station rape suite - who was left feeling humiliated.

EMMA: I felt degraded, I felt cheapened because they make you stand there with no clothes on on a piece of paper. They comb through your pubic hairs, they go through your hair, they take swabs everywhere. I didn't want that at that time, because I didn't feel I could have coped with that. All I wanted to do was to go home, have a bath. But I was kept there for nine and a half hours and I felt as if I could be in prison.

SHAW: So they kept you there for nine and a half hours?

EMMA: Yeah.

SHAW: Examined you, took a statement?

EMMA: Yeah.

SHAW: Did they examine you for bite marks as well?

EMMA: Yes, they could see them, but the bruising hadn't come out that much, they just like drew diagrams, you know, on like a piece of paper.

SHAW: Did they take any pictures of you?

EMMA: No, none whatsoever.

SHAW: That seems a bit remiss.

EMMA: It was, I got an apology, but I was meant to be happy with that, and that's all I ever got was, 'I'm sorry, we should have done it,' and that evidence were lost.

SHAW: The way rape victims are dealt with varies widely. A review last year found that some rape suites weren't forensically clean and that there were shortages of female forensic medical examiners. Fourteen independently-run sexual assault referral centres have been set up, but many areas aren't covered. Nevertheless, efforts to improve victim care have led to an increase in the number prepared to come forward. The founder member of the campaign group, Women Against Rape, is Ruth Hall.

HALL: There are cases where the police now listen to the woman sympathetically and do their best. There are police officers who will do their best, but it's not justice if there's one treatment for some people and different treatment for somebody else.

SHAW: And the workload on them?

SMYTH: Workload can be very high. It's a bit like plate spinning I suppose - you go to the plate that's about to fall off. I hope that, in terms of the end result, it shouldn't make a great difference, and we should get there even though it may take longer.

SHAW: But you are six hundred detectives short in London?

SMYTH: Yes, and that clearly has an impact on a lot of areas of crime.

SHAW: I mean, even if you had two-thirds of the caseload, that would mean that you could devote more attention to a rape investigation, wouldn't it?

SMYTH: Oh undoubtedly.

SHAW: Which could mean you could find that missing piece of evidence that you haven't got at the moment that could help bring the case to court.

SMYTH: Logically one would say that has to be true.

SHAW: Detectives have told us that other forces are stretched too. ACPO's leading police officer on rape, Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Yates, admits some cases are not given the attention they deserve.

YATES: Best practice in my view is specialist detectives, specially trained, dealing with these type of offences. But we have to recognise, amongst everything else that we have to do, the range of serious crime and violent crime and other offences that are committed, that it's sometimes not feasible.

SHAW: I've spoken to one detective constable in London. They've got so many cases to deal with, he described it as like spinning plates in the air - you go to the one that's about to fall off. It doesn't sound like the best way to deal with a major investigation such as a rape.

YATES: No, and I think most people would accept that. But there are conflicting pressures. My view is that rape is an absolute priority and I would encourage and we would demand that that offence gets the support and the attention that it deserves. Of course there are going to be examples, as you've picked up, where officers are incredibly busy and we've got to ensure from a senior level that those officers are supported and get the resources and get the training they need to manage these cases in the appropriate way.

SHAW: But 80% of rape cases never make it beyond the investigative stage. To take a case to court, the Crown Prosecution Service has to be certain that there's a realistic prospect of conviction.

ACTUALITY OF PAPERS RUSTLING

SHAW: This is a letter from the Chief Crown Prosecutor to your local MP explaining why the CPS ...

Emma – who said she was raped at her home in Lancashire six years ago – showed me some correspondence about the decision to drop the charges against her alleged attacker. In this letter it says there'd been previous sexual behaviour by those involved, they'd got very drunk and the rape wasn't reported straight away.

This letter from the Chief Crown Prosecutor says that when police officers were called to a drunken brawl between your husband and the man you alleged raped you, that no complaint about a rape was made. Is that true that there was a brawl but no complaint was made at that time?

EMMA: Well there was a brawl that had happened, but obviously I wasn't there, it was my husband that had run out of the house to find him to see what had gone on, and when my husband came back, obviously he knew then what had happened and I shortly after that had rung the police. But he couldn't have told them at the time because he didn't know.

SHAW: It goes on to say that the police weren't informed until later the same day, which suggests quite a number of hours later, if not the afternoon or evening, is that right?

EMMA: No. It was about an hour afterwards.

SHAW: It doesn't say that in the letter though, does it?

EMMA: No, it doesn't, but that's what I did try and get it changed because it was definitely about an hour afterwards.

SHAW: The inspectorates of constabulary and the CPS examined decisions about rape prosecutions and found examples of incorrect reasoning. Prosecutors tended to consider only weaknesses in a case, rather than trying to develop it. They also said medical evidence wasn't being properly assessed. Is that what happened in Emma's case? We asked the minister responsible for rape prosecutions, Mike O'Brien, the Solicitor General, to look at the file. Were you aware of the fact that there were injuries on the woman's body – bite marks that weren't photographed by the police?

O'BRIEN: No, I wasn't aware of that, but at the same time I was aware that there were marks on the body. Whether there were photographs taken I didn't know.

SHAW: That could have made a huge difference if a photograph had been taken of those injuries.

O'BRIEN: I would like to raise a dispute about that. There was a doctor's report which showed that there was an injury.

SHAW: But a report by a doctor and actual photographs, I mean, that would be good practice would it not to take photographs?

O'BRIEN: Oh it would certainly be good practice now to have photographs. The whole procedure and the way in which rape cases are dealt with is entirely different. These days, hopefully a lot better in terms of putting the case together.

SHAW: We have a letter here from the Crown Prosecution Service that was written to the alleged victim, that contains information that she says is completely wrong. That there wasn't sexual behaviour on the night in question. The letter says that the woman made a complaint to the police later the same day, well it was about an hour or an hour and a half later and that's acknowledged later on. Reading the letter, it suggests that a decision has sort of almost been made before the facts have been established and before she has had an opportunity to put her side of the story.

O'BRIEN: This is one of the rare cases where there was a witness and where the witness took a view about what had happened. There's no reason to challenge the independent witness's evidence, and it's safe to say that even now, having reviewed the papers in the last few days, prosecutors take the view that the judgement made was the correct one.

SHAW: According to Lancashire police, the evidence of that witness – Emma's sister - wasn't so clear cut. They took the highly unusual step of having the case reviewed internally and by an independent QC. But to the dismay of Detective Sergeant Mark Goodchild, the CPS refused to take the case to court.

GOODCHILD: I was very disappointed. I felt it was a regrettable decision. I would have hoped that we would have had some consultation with them over the matter. Whilst Emma was severely intoxicated, she's been honest, she's been subjected to rigorous questioning by experienced detectives and those detectives detailed to me that they believed that she was telling the truth. And I felt that she would have shown any jury that she was being honest at the time, and I believed that she was a victim of quite a nasty attack.

SHAW: The Solicitor General, Mike O'Brien has looked at this case and his view is that there was an independent witness, Emma's sister, who's account was critical to the reason why the Crown Prosecution didn't want to prosecute. What's your view of that?

GOODCHILD: That independent witness, whilst giving one account initially, did change their mind and ultimately believe Emma.

SHAW: So her account actually could have assisted the prosecution?

GOODCHILD: I do believe so, yes.

SHAW: When she heard the case was being dropped, Emma tried to kill herself.

EMMA: The night they told me, I did take an overdose, my life to me wasn't worth living. Yeah, I had children, I had a husband, but to me that was just something I couldn't cope with. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, I couldn't even go and open my own front door. I felt severely let down and the only way I could think of it all stopping was by ending my own life.

SHAW: Have things improved in your life, have you managed to put it behind you, or are you still angry, hurt?

EMMA: I'm always angry, very angry. It still bothers me. There are days now even when I can watch a programme and someone's being raped and I might go for another few weeks then without sleeping, but it'll never go away. And even if he'd got a conviction it might have made things easier for me and I might have felt as if I hadn't been let down, but no, it doesn't make it any different.

SHAW: Three-quarters of rape prosecutions are either dropped or result in the defendant being cleared. A survey for Amnesty International suggested that the attitude of juries could be partly to blame. Many of the people polled said women brought rape upon themselves by drinking too much, flirting or wearing revealing clothing. Ministers are now planning to allow experts to testify in rape trials to help explain victim behaviour – including why some don't come forward immediately. The system has been widely used in courtrooms in the United States for forty years. Prosecutor Robert Laurino heads the sex crimes unit at Essex County, in New Jersey.

LAURINO: Many of these things are very counter-intuitive - why a person would not cry out, why a person would not report, and the average juror does not really understand the emotional upheaval that a rape victim is undergoing at the time of the incident and immediately after the incident itself. For instance, something that we call frozen fright, where the victim does not scream out, the victim essentially goes into a survival mode – and therefore will do just about anything in order to survive. We have had a number of cases in the US where victims have asked their attackers to utilize a condom, because they are so fearful of disease. There've been some juries in the States that thought a woman asking a defendant to utilize a condom meant that the act was consensual. So again, for these types of unnatural, unexplained types of behaviour, it can be essential that an expert be brought into explain that dynamic to a jury.

SHAW: But lawyers we've spoken to are sceptical about the proposal. Criminal barrister Kirsty Brimelow.

BRIMELOW: It will remove even more the obligation and the onus upon the police to gather proper evidence. If there is a difficulty with complainants going to the police, which there clearly still is, that's a problem that the police have with their image, and they need to put across that they do have specialist units to deal with complainants in sexual offences in order to encourage people to make complaints at the first opportunity. By bringing in expert evidence so much further down the line, it's just not addressing the root of the problem which is clearly that women still feel uncomfortable and feel they will not be listened to if they dial 999.

SHAW: But surely we've got such a low conviction rate, even when cases come to court, you have to do something in the meantime to address that. One of the options, surely, would be to try and explain to a jury this is commonly the way that women would behave in these situations?

BRIMELOW: I think that a complainant can explain that herself. She can say, 'I didn't go to the police for four days because I didn't feel I'd be believed and I thought maybe it was my fault, I thought perhaps because I'd drunk alcohol, no one would listen to me.' I don't see any reason why a complainant can't give that evidence and that evidence be understood by a jury. Expert evidence could complicate things, the

KATY: It wasn't as successful as I'd hoped because, I just kept waking up afraid that it was happening to me again [cries].

SHAW: A fortnight later, Katy did go to the police – worried the man could strike again. The CPS agreed to prosecute, but the trial didn't begin for another fourteen months. It got off to a bad start, when the prosecution barrister came to advise Katy about the defendant's background.

KATY: He appeared in the witness room before the case started, very swiftly, with some police officers saying, 'I shouldn't be speaking to you but I'm just here to warn you that if you mention anything about his previous conviction you will destroy the entire case and we'll have to adjourn it.'

SHAW: What was your reaction to that?

KATY: I was quite surprised that there wasn't someone coming to shake my hand and say, 'Let's hope we nail him,' and give me an encouraging nod and a handshake. Just this very swift, extremely abrupt man, who sort of swished in and out of the room in a matter of seconds.

SHAW: Did it help at all?

KATY: No, I was actually slightly alarmed. I really felt that there was absolutely no sympathy at all or no encouragement or anything coming from this man and it did actually make me feel quite nervous.

SHAW: CPS guidelines say barristers in rape cases should try to put nervous witnesses at ease. They're also being encouraged to discuss their evidence in broad terms, a practice that's been frowned on. Katy, however, received no such help - leaving her unprepared for the cross-examination.

KATY: The picture of me that the defence barrister was trying to paint was of someone who was desperately trying to become part of a social milieu which the defendant considers himself to be part of. That I didn't really have the

KATY cont: money or the connections and so I guess probably what they were leading to was that I made sexual advances towards him, which he rejected and in my fit of pique two weeks later I accused him of raping me as some kind of act of revenge or sort of insane response to rejection or my dashed hopes.

SHAW: Do you think that was a fair tactic to use, because the defendant has a right to be represented and to argue his case, doesn't he?

KATY: It never came to the point that he was cross-examined or the fact that the first thing that happened is that I am on trial really for my motivations for bringing a false allegation. No one went on trial in that court except for me.

PASCOE: When a victim says that she felt she was on trial, that is quite wrong and I don't defend it for a moment.

SHAW: Nigel Pascoe QC has been a barrister for forty years. He also sits part-time as a Crown Court judge.

PASCOE: It is never - and I repeat - never ever necessary to bully, demean, undermine a victim. That simply isn't necessary. I do both, prosecute and defend, and it's necessary that you put your case clearly, but you don't have to be discourteous. I believe passionately that good barristers don't bully witnesses and if they are tempted to do so, it's the job of the judge and sometimes the prosecution to stop it happening.

SHAW: When you have a rape victim saying that she felt that she was on trial, isn't that an indictment of the whole court system that deals with rape cases?

PASCOE: Not necessarily. You've got to realise that it's a pretty traumatic ordeal to give evidence anyway. But it does suggest that there hasn't been sufficient courtesy and decency and kindness shown to the victim as she went through the system.

SHAW: At Katy's trial, after two days in the witness box, the key issue became how much she could remember about the incident, because she'd had a lot to drink.

KATY: I wanted to absolutely tell the truth, so if there was anything that I was in any doubt about, I would say, 'Well, I'm not sure,' or, 'I can't remember.' And the judge stopped me and said, 'Did you lie down and go to sleep immediately when you sat on the couch?' And I said, 'I can't remember whether I went straight to sleep or whether, you know, we chatted for a while,' and he said, 'So it's possible that you actually were making advances to the defendant during this period?' And I said, 'All I've told you is that from the moment of sitting on the couch to the moment of waking up, I don't remember anything.'

SHAW: And what was the result of saying I can't remember?

KATY: The judge adjourned the case, and the police called me when I was on my way home to tell me that the case had been thrown out of court by the judge on the basis that I was an unreliable witness.

SHAW: What was your response to that?

KATY: I was absolutely horrified. I was horrified that it should be my fault that this didn't go further, that he didn't come close to conviction, that he never even had to be cross-examined, that he never even had to feel the threat of a conviction. That all that had happened was that I had been through a very traumatic time and he was just going to walk out scot free and in a sense it was my fault.

SHAW: A study last year by the Metropolitan Police found that more than a third of rape complainants had been drinking. The head of psychology at the University of Surrey, Professor Jennifer Brown, has also carried out extensive research into the issue.

BROWN: I think where drink is implicated in a rape, especially if it's taken place in a social setting, it's almost impossible for the police to put forward a suitably strong evidenced case that will persuade a jury that any sex that took place was coerced. I think there's a sufficient reasonable doubt that a jury will exercise that if they're not sure, labelling an individual a rapist is an extremely serious thing to do. And so where there's a scintilla of doubt, they're going to make the judgment that they're not persuaded.

SHAW: The 2003 Sexual Offences Act attempted to address this by re-defining the meaning of consent. The Act says that a person consents if they agree by choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. The defendant has to show that his belief in consent was reasonable. One of the aims was to make it easier to convict men who had sex with women when they were too drunk to consent. But a case at Swansea Crown Court last November has raised concerns that the law isn't being interpreted correctly. The alleged victim - a student - claimed she was raped in a corridor after drinking so heavily she'd been sick and had passed out. We've been shown a transcript of an exchange between the woman and the Defence barrister.

READER 1 IN STUDIO: Do you actually remember not touching him?

READER 2 IN STUDIO: I didn't touch him.

READER 1 IN STUDIO: How do you know?

READER 2 IN STUDIO: Because I don't remember touching him.

READER 1 IN STUDIO: Well that is your answer, is it not? Because you do not remember something, you are saying it did not happen. That is an example of it, is it not? "I don't remember touching him, therefore I wasn't touching him".

READER 2 IN STUDIO: Yes, that's what I'm saying.

SHAW: The Defence barrister went on:

READER 1 IN STUDIO: "And because I feel myself I would not have consented to casual, spontaneous, exciting sex, because I don't think I'm that sort of person I don't remember it, but I wouldn't have given my consent". That is really what you exactly...

READER 2 IN STUDIO: No, I wouldn't have given my consent and I didn't give my consent.

READER 1 IN STUDIO: But you cannot say for definite that you did not give your consent, because you cannot remember, can you?

READER 2 IN STUDIO: I can't remember, no.

SHAW: Eighteen minutes after the woman's cross-examination ended, the Prosecution barrister told the court he would offer no further evidence.

READER 3 IN STUDIO: The prosecution are conscious of the fact that a drunken consent is still a consent and in answer, in cross-examination, she said, in terms, that she could not remember giving her consent, and that is fatal to the Prosecution's case.

SHAW: Mr Justice Evans agreed, adding later that there'd never been any prospect of a conviction. On his orders, the defendant was acquitted, without having to explain in court why he thought the inebriated student he'd had sex with was capable of consenting. A report on the case was sent to the Solicitor General, Mike O'Brien. He believes the law may need re-drafting.

O'BRIEN: What we're looking at is amending the legislation so that we can better deal with the issue of alcohol and leave it to the jury to decide whether a person was capable of giving consent or not. And in those circumstances the jury would be able to make a decision that a person who might well be very drunk was not in a position to give consent, and therefore the defendant may well be guilty.

SHAW: There have been those who've said to us, I think the law's fine at the moment, it's a question of how it's interpreted, and where there have been mistakes it's because people have interpreted it wrongly in court, either barristers or judges.

O'BRIEN: That may well be the case. But therefore it may be that the legislation needs some clarification because these sorts of mistakes shouldn't be being made. I do think that there have been cases in which some extremely well qualified judges and barristers have taken a view on the law which was not the intention of Parliament.

SHAW: Do you believe that if the law is changed in that direction, it will lead to an increase in the conviction rate?

O'BRIEN: I think it probably would.

SHAW: Mr O'Brien also admitted that another recent legal reform isn't working. In 2000, laws were introduced to prevent rape victims being cross-examined about irrelevant details of their sexual history, such as how many people they'd slept with and whether they'd had an abortion.

O'BRIEN: It is the case that we're still having quite a lot of past sexual history being brought in. The aim of Parliament was to reduce that happening and to a considerable extent it has been reduced, but not enough. Now we've been looking at this and it's one of the areas where I hope we can take further steps to encourage judges to take a stronger line on this.

SHAW: But how do you do that? How do you educate judges to do that?

O'BRIEN: Well I think the judges can educate themselves quite well on this.

SHAW: How are you going to help them?

O'BRIEN: We have had some discussions with judges about this issue.

SHAW: Are they receptive?

O'BRIEN: Yes.

SHAW: So no more tightening up of the law in that area?

O'BRIEN: I think Parliament stands ready to change this again if it is needed, but at the moment I'm not convinced that legislation in this area is needed. What I think is the law's probably fine, it's the way it's being applied that perhaps we just need to tighten a little.

SHAW: Others say the reforms don't go far enough – what's needed is a more radical approach. To repair the psychological and emotional damage caused by rape by bringing victim and offender together, a form of restorative justice. Professor Jennifer Brown from the University of Surrey.

BROWN: I think the criminal justice system within the United Kingdom is clearly failing victims of rape. We have an adversarial system, whereby defence counsel are going to attempt to discredit the primary witness, and in the case of rape this is our victim.

SHAW: What are the alternatives?

BROWN: Well there have been some alternative experiments conducted in Europe, in Denmark and in America, where they've attempted a mediational process. This takes it outside the criminal justice system and it looks more like a restorative justice model. One of the reasons why victims of rape suffer so badly psychologically and the trauma that they suffer is through self blaming. So one of the elements I think in a restorative justice interview would be to try and understand from the offender's point of view why he did it and to shift the responsibility for the rape back to the offender rather than the victim taking on her own sense of blame and culpability for what happened.

SHAW: The scheme in Denmark has been running for two years at the Centre for Victims of Sexual Assault, based at Copenhagen's University Hospital. It involves rape cases which haven't proceeded to court, or have failed to result in a conviction. However, both victim and offender must be willing to meet face-to-face, as Karen Steed Madsen, who devised the programme, explains.

MADSEN: I sit at the end of the table, they sit on both sides. The first question from the woman is always: How could you do this to me? And there's a lot of rage and a lot of anger. And I think this is also one of the things why this meeting is so useful, because the women can express anger and direct the anger toward the person who made them angry and who caused them pain.

SHAW: But does it become an exercise for the man in making excuses for what he's done?

MADSEN: I never came across a man who admitted having raped a woman. So a lot of the talk is about, why did you think that I consented to this?

SHAW: But it sounds to me as though the man is getting off the hook, is able to get away with it, because he doesn't have to admit to rape.

MADSEN: On the other hand - what is the alternative? You have a lot of men walking around out there who have been accused of rape. Now nothing happens. I think that it is dangerous somehow not to address what has happened, not to give the women and the men a chance of restoring the harm that the men have caused.

SHAW: In Britain, in 1998, a meeting arranged by a newspaper took place between Jill Saward and a member of a gang which had broken into her father's vicarage in west London twelve years earlier. The burglar said sorry, she accepted his apology. During the break-in, Jill was brutally raped by two other men. But she has never met them again - and doesn't think it'll help other rape victims to come face-to-face with their attackers.

SAWARD: I think that I wouldn't recommend that people meet rapists, because one of the reasons people want to meet often is to find out why. And a rapist can't tell you why, or it's very very rare that a rapist can tell you why. And I think that you would just come away with even more frustration, even more questions unanswered, and a very great deal of fear as well.

SHAW: But this is a scheme that's been used in Denmark, it's been used in Arizona in the United States as well, and they claim that the success is very high, that the victims feel some sense of closure or satisfaction at the meeting, and that the rates of reoffending are reduced amongst the people who carried out the attack

SAWARD: Well I know that restorative justice people push for it and think it is a good thing, but when you actually look at the fact that most rapes that happen are actually by known offenders anyway, they're not going to be able to justify why they did it. Unless an awful lot of work has been done with the perpetrator beforehand, and until you can actually convince the man that he has done something very wrong, I can't see that there would be any benefit in meeting him or having a discussion with him about why he's done what he's done.

SHAW: But lawyers and practitioners are in favour of using restorative justice for rape cases, as it is for lower-level crime. The senior officer who develops police policy on rape, John Yates, told us it's worth exploring. Do you see a role for restorative justice in rape cases?

YATES: I think there could be. The type of offence it is would be quite difficult, and clearly terribly sensitive, and I would - it would have to be very much driven by the victim as opposed to going to the defendant's credit in terms of mitigation. But if it would help a victim, if it's something the victim wanted and something could be designed that would be appropriate and sensitive, then it's something I would support.

SHAW: Could you see it being used at the stage where the prosecution, for example, decided a case wasn't going to come to court?

YATES: Again, pretty difficult really. I would see it being used really in the post-guilty stage as opposed to beforehand. But I wouldn't dismiss it, if victims and victims groups thought it could be helpful, then clearly that is something we would want to scrutinise and consider.

SHAW: Ministers have so far shown little enthusiasm for the idea, preferring to focus on legal reform and a campaign to modify the behaviour of young men. But previous initiatives have failed, with the rape conviction rate in the last twenty-five years plummeting from one in three, to one in eighteen. The Government recognises the problem – but there's little confidence amongst those we've spoken to that what's being proposed will make a substantial difference.

SIGNATURE TUNE