

**Written evidence submitted by We Can't Consent
To This - further submission (DAB73)**

Consent Defences and the Criminal Justice System

Research Briefing – England and Wales

June 2020

1 Scope

- 1.1.1.1 This research considers cases of violence where that violence is claimed to be consensual, and the response of the criminal justice system in England and Wales.
- 1.1.1.2 It is intended to support the Government in its review of so called “rough sex defences”, and the work of Members of Parliament in confirming the scope of the Domestic Abuse bill. We have previously submitted summary evidence to the bill committee setting out our support for amendments NC4 - NC11, and to draw Committee Members’ attention to areas where further provision might be needed to end the success of “rough sex” claims in evading justice. We recommend that earlier evidence submission – *We Can’t Consent To This Evidence for the Public Bill Committee: Domestic Abuse Bill 2019-21* – as the first port of call for committee members in considering these matters.
- 1.1.1.3 This research document sets out our fuller research findings and is submitted to committee members to support their assessment of need for further areas of provision, and to support the Government’s own proposals.
- 1.1.1.4 This research briefing sets out We Can’t Consent To This’s data and observations on the recent England and Wales cases of violent assault and homicide where the accused claims that this was consensual. This We Can’t Consent To This research focuses on data and analysis of criminal cases in England and Wales over the ten years from 2010. Although some earlier cases are included for historical context and particularly where they are now influential in outcomes. We have excluded cases which relate to Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 1.1.1.5 Sections **3** and **4** of this document set out our observations on the criminal justice system’s response to rough sex claims – and **Section 5** sets out what needs to change. **Section 6** and **Section 7** set out our data on cases where these claims have been made – in both non-fatal assaults and in homicides.
- 1.1.1.6 We Can’t Consent To this supports the amendments NC4 – NC11 to the Domestic Abuse bill proposed by MPs Harriet Harman, Mark Garnier, Laura Farris and others – and these have cross party and public support. But the Government can go further – rough sex claims have been successful for nearly 50 years, and law change and more is needed to fix this.

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2 Contents

1	Scope	2
2	Contents	3
3	Summary	4
3.2	What do we mean by rough sex defences?	5
3.3	Summary of findings on homicides and context to these claims	6
4	Observations on Criminal Justice System Responses to Consent Claims in Defence to Violence	7
4.1	The case law, R v Brown.....	7
4.1.2	Brown case law is rarely mentioned in courts	7
4.1.3	But where Brown is applied, consent is still beneficial in sentencing	7
4.1.4	Brown - the case that students of law love to hate - its reputation is impacting prosecutions	8
4.2	Under prosecution of violence claimed to be consensual.....	8
4.2.1	Serious and sustained violence recast as something you can consent to.....	8
4.2.2	Sexual and sadistic violence recast as sex that the woman wanted	10
4.2.3	Strangulation and asphyxiation is widespread and widely underprosecuted.....	10
4.2.4	Women reporting strangulation told by police: “you could have consented”	11
4.2.5	Additional violence not charged in sexual assault cases	11
4.3	The embedded myth that women really do die in fatal “sex”	12
4.4	Previous sexual history used in court in defence to charges of violence.....	12
4.4.1	Sexual History used as evidence in Non-fatal Assault cases	12
4.4.2	Sexual History used as evidence in Homicides	13
4.4.3	No anonymity for victims	13
5	How the success of rough sex claims may be brought to an end	14
5.2	The scope of the DA Bill amendments can only go so far:	15
5.3	Data Collection and monitoring of outcomes	15
6	Non-Fatal Assaults where consent to violence is claimed.....	16
7	Fatal Assaults where consent to violence is claimed.....	29

3 Summary

- 3.1.1.1 We Can't Consent To This research the extent of so-called "rough sex", or consent defences to violence and campaign against the normalisation of violence against women. We were first to research the full extent of rough sex defences in the UK and beyond.
- 3.1.1.2 Rough sex defences can be made in both homicides and non-fatal assaults. Only men have used these defences in the UK. We have now found 60 homicides of UK women where the injuries are claimed to be part of consensual rough sex, and 7 homicides of men. We also have 114 women in UK court cases where violence (excepting sexual violence) is claimed to be consensual.
- 3.1.1.3 We now collect data on these cases as they happen. These assaults often feature appallingly serious injuries, many lifechanging for those who survive, and they are becoming more common. There was a tenfold increase in rough sex claims between 1996 and 2016. And just between November 2019 and March 2020, 15 women were victims in UK court cases where these rough sex claims were made, along with the murder in New Zealand of Grace Millane by a man whose claim that she consented was repeated in news stories all over the world, along with lurid detail of her alleged sexual history.
- 3.1.1.4 Thanks to the case law decision in R v Brown, you should not be able to claim consent to serious injury in the law of England and Wales, but our research on the outcomes in the criminal justice system shows that this existing case law is not up to the task and that statutory provision is now required, as well as wide ranging measures to ensure that the law works in practice, and adequate data be collected to confirm the law is working.
- 3.1.1.5 This research briefing sets out our data on homicides and non-fatal assaults – the detail of the latter is included here for the first time. In homicides, too often the claim that she consented is successful, with prosecution for manslaughter, a lighter sentence, or in some cases the death initially not treated as a crime at all.
- 3.1.1.6 Now we have found that the existing case law is referred to rarely in the non-fatal assault cases, and even where consent defence is disallowed by judges, they will give credit in sentencing for "a belief" that the woman consented. Men are not being prosecuted for acts of admitted violence – and even where they are, the man presents a defence that she consented, and often juries do not convict.
- 3.1.1.7 The violence used in non-fatal assaults includes waterboarding, wounding, electrocution, strangulation and asphyxiation, slapping, beating, punching, and kicking, and in one case, a shotgun fired intimately at a woman.
- 3.1.1.8 Notably the women injured in the cases in our research do not agree that they consented to the violence, where they are able to take part in criminal proceedings. But still the claims they did succeed.
- 3.1.1.9 The 1993 Brown case law - which concerned gay men in consensual sadomasochism – has long been argued by lawyers and students to be illiberal, outdated, and ripe for reform. And case law decisions since have narrowed the effect of Brown. **We can now confirm that the CPS believe that the case law will be overturned and so are not prosecuting violent assaults which could be claimed to be consensual.**
- 3.1.1.10 Whether violence is prosecuted as homicide, common assault, or assault occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm, substantial evidence of previous consent or of her sexual history may be presented in court. In cases which have no sexual assault charge, her name and sexual history is widely reported in news, and there are no restrictions on this.
- 3.1.1.11 These "consent" to violence claims can also be successful in cases of sexual assault, where charges relating to this additional violence are not pursued and the rape or sexual assault prosecution is not successful. We do not know if the decision not to prosecute additional violence is due to the CPS belief that Brown will be overturned, but it appears to be common practice. And with rape convictions at historic lows, women tell us men who admit to beating or strangling them are not prosecuted at all, as the CPS drop rape prosecutions against those men.
- 3.1.1.12 We hear from women told by police that they could have consented to strangulation, and so it won't be prosecuted. And in those case which are prosecuted, strangulation is underprosecuted, most often not charged at all in non-fatal assaults, or charged only as common assault
- 3.1.1.13 We find that many of the women killed or injured in "rough sex" defence cases were in existing or prior relationships with the men – but not all. Those who had just met, were work colleagues of, or were neighbours of the perpetrator would not be covered by any amendment to the Domestic Abuse bill if these amendments are restricted to the bill's scope of being personally connected.
- 3.1.1.14 We have found that it appears fairly common for those with history of domestic abuse who are accused of violence like beating or wounding to tell police that the woman's injuries were in fact due to rough sex, and this claim will be reported in the news along with her name, even where these men plead guilty to the assault at court.
- 3.1.1.15 In summary, these consent claims do not always work – but far too often they are worth a try.

3.2 What do we mean by rough sex defences?

- 3.2.1.1 Simply, these are cases where violence is claimed to be consensual - part of sex - by the person accused, at some point in their contact with the criminal justice system. These may be homicides or non-fatal assaults. These include cases of sexual violence (rape or sexual assault) which have additional violence like strangulation, slapping, punching, beating or wounding where it is claimed that was also consensual.
- 3.2.1.2 Violence, including fatal violence, may be explained away as “rough sex”, a “sex game”, “role play”, or “BDSM” “gone wrong”.
- 3.2.1.3 We include all cases where this consent to violence claim is made, whether that is made to police on first response, or at appeal in attempt to reduce a sentence.

3.3 Summary of findings on homicides and context to these claims

3.3.1.1 We know that the Government is aware of both the scale of this issue and the need for action. This briefing focuses on specific failings and including new research on non-fatal assaults in England and Wales. For ease, our previously published¹ statistics on rough sex claims are summarised below.

- 60 homicides of UK women, 7 homicides of UK men, 115 UK non-fatal assaults² where rough sex is claimed by the accused.
- The first homicide of a woman with a rough sex defence was in 1972. In the last ten years 30 women have been killed, and 15 in the last five years, where it's claimed they consented to the violence.
- Of the 115 non-fatal assaults, 114 of the victims were female.
- All of those accused of this violence, who make the claim it was “rough sex”, are male.
- All of the women, where they can give evidence, say **they did not consent to the violence**.
- There is no clear delineation of the category of these non-fatal assaults. Some are prosecuted as rapes which have additional violence - that may or may not be prosecuted. Some are violent assaults in – til then – consensual sex. Others are violent assaults which are presented as “rough sex”, but without sexual assault. **The clearest categorisation of these is that they are all acts of violence which the women did not ask for, but the man accused says she wanted it.**
- **There is now widespread violent assault of women in sex: 2 million UK women³ have experienced unwanted “choking” or strangulation in til then consensual sex.** Hundreds of women have now told us of their experiences of unbidden violence from sexual partners – some of their stories can be seen [here](#).

3.3.1.2 Of the 60 homicides where the defendant used a claim of “rough sex”:

- **45% resulted in a prosecution for manslaughter, a lesser sentence, or the death not prosecuted as a crime at all.**
- 32 women were killed by current or former partners – of those most (at least 21) had been abusive to the women for some period of time before the killing.
- A third of the women had met their killers the same day they were killed.
- Two thirds of the women were strangled. This is three times the rate of strangulation in killings of women as a whole.
- **At least 20 women were killed by men who have other convictions for serious violence against women.** These include murder, rape, attempted rape, kidnapping, assault. At least 3 of the men killed again after successfully using rough sex claims.
- In four of the recent homicides, the man watched extreme porn before or after the homicide.

¹ [We Can't Consent To This – What Can Be Consented To?](#) February 2020

² All since the 1993 R v Brown decision

³ Estimated 2 million UK women under 40 have experienced unwanted strangulation/choking in sex that began as consensual. Source: WCCCTT Analysis 2020, referencing [BBC/Comres](#) 2019 research on women's experience of violence in sex

4 Observations on Criminal Justice System Responses to Consent Claims in Defence to Violence

4.1 The case law, R v Brown

4.1.1.1 There is case law in England and Wales - *R v Brown* - which decided that more than "transient or trifling" injuries could not be consented to in law. This case – of gay men practicing extreme consensual sadomasochism and who were convicted of GBH – went through appeals to the House of Lords and the European Court of Human Rights⁴. In practice Brown is interpreted as deciding that assault causing actual bodily harm (ABH) cannot be consented to, but that common assault *can* rely on the victim's consent in defence. The Brown decision has been diluted in subsequent cases where men have caused serious injury or the death of a woman, so case law might be interpreted that you can consent to violence that has risk (even arguable certainty) of harm, even lifechanging harm, even death, if the accused didn't intend⁵ to cause that harm and didn't foresee it⁶. The woman of course, is often assume to have known the risk of what she was consenting to.

4.1.1.2 Or she would have done if she was in a condition to consent: in Meachen and Broadhurst⁷, the women were either unconscious or highly intoxicated. It might be surprising that men claim not to have foreseen the risk of serious injury to women from intimate insertion of objects, especially given the fatal outcome in the Slingsby case in 1995, and the seven⁸ other women killed in this way in claimed sex games gone wrong⁹.

4.1.1.3 We believe that the law has a powerful impact on setting societal norms. Through our campaign we know that public understanding of the case law, in particular the decision in Brown, is extremely low. But even within the criminal justice system, it seems that Brown is not being adhered to.

4.1.2 Brown case law is rarely mentioned in courts

4.1.2.1 Very few court reports or published judgements where consent is claimed to violence include any acknowledgement of the "consent is no defence to serious injury" decision in the Brown case law.

4.1.2.2 In Lock [2013]¹⁰, the accused's defence to assault causing ABH was that she consented to being beaten with a rope as part of a master slave arrangement, inspired by "Fifty Shades of Grey". Although consent should have been no defence to this ABH charge, evidence was given on both her sexual history, and his defence set out that "*the issue is 'did she consent and did Mr Lock believe that she consented?' Is this an assault any more than a mistimed tackle in football?*". Lock was found not guilty by the jury, although he was jailed the following year for assaulting his new partner, which was his seventh domestic violence conviction.

4.1.3 But where Brown is applied, consent is still beneficial in sentencing

4.1.3.1 In the few cases where Brown is acknowledged, the sentence may nevertheless be reduced if the defendant claims that his victim consented to the violence.

- In Wright [2015], the judge warned him that consent is no defence, before agreeing that he had believed that "everyone was consenting" and sentencing him to a community order.

⁴ The ECHR rejected the appeal: the court unanimously held that there had been no violation of Article 8 right to respect for private life [ECHR Judgement 19 February 1997](#)

⁵ Sentencing remarks in *R v Broadhurst* referred to Slingsby: "A woman may lawfully consent to having something inserted into her vagina (or rectum) for the purposes of sexual gratification but without an intention to cause injury, even if doing so carries a risk of injury, and injury is indeed caused:". The woman here, Natalie Connolly, was highly intoxicated, "falling down drunk", when she allegedly gave her consent to this.

⁶ Meachen [2006] – successfully appealed as he wanted to claim a defence that *she consented but he didn't foresee the injury he caused her*. The woman did not remember the assault and it was the prosecution's case that she had been unconscious, drugged with GHB.

⁷ Both referenced the Brown decision and Slingsby. Similarly in killing of Hannah Pearson in 2016, she was highly intoxicated and strangled without warning. The judge considered her consent in sentencing, noting Hannah's "consent" wasn't "valid and informed" in this case, rather bizarrely given James Pearson admitted at court he didn't have any consent from Hannah to 'choke' her.

⁸ WCCTT research, 2019

⁹ The Spanner Trust campaign for some liberalisation of the law on consent – some of their members were part of the *R v Brown* case. [They have interesting perspective on](#) Slingsby, that the dropping of all charges was the wrong decision "The Trust believes that any reasonable man engaged in such activity would be aware that "fisting" whilst wearing a signet ring was an extremely dangerous practice and that serious lasting injury or death might be a probable consequence of such an act and that the death was therefore caused by his gross negligence and he should have been convicted of manslaughter."

¹⁰ See Section 5 [Non-fatal Assaults where consent to violence is claimed](#)

- In Wilkins [2018] again “no consent to serious injury” is part of the news reporting at least: but here the judge “The two of you behaved very irresponsibly that day and night, then you started beating her up. To begin with you did not even realise that she was not consenting, I accept you were horrified when you did” and sentenced him to a community order.

4.1.3.2 Note that in both cases, the victim says she did not consent, but the defendant’s “reasonable” belief in consent seems to be given weight in sentencing for ABH.

4.1.3.3 And in the sentencing of the man convicted of the homicide of Natalie Connolly, the judge allowed for her consent to beating with a boot, insertion of carpet cleaner spray, even though she was also “falling down drunk”.

4.1.4 Brown - the case that students of law love to hate¹¹ - its reputation is impacting prosecutions

4.1.4.1 Many¹² practicing¹³ and student¹⁴ lawyers have claimed that Brown is outdated and illiberal: perhaps favouring the English Law Commission’s proposal¹⁵ in 1995 to roll back Brown and liberalise the law on consent. That ELC consultation did not consider any impact on violence against women and girls. We hope our research has begun to change the discussion: that the Brown decision is not being used in consensual sadomasochism, but is now applied (if intermittently) in the real cases of serious violence against women who say they did not consent, or whom have been subjected to fatal violence and cannot say otherwise.

4.1.4.2 We understand that the CPS are not prosecuting violent assaults as they share the view that Brown is likely to be overturned by the courts.

4.1.4.3 A woman has shared her story. She was violently assaulted by a man who claims she had consented to the injuries. The CPS have told her they will be taking no further action in her case as this would require them to pursue assault charges that the accused could say she consented to. She has challenged their decision, and so the CPS informed¹⁶ her that:

"A prosecution could follow in relation to this offence but the courts have shown an interest in changing the law so that the suspect could say that you consented to these assaults. This would be difficult to disprove for the reasons set out earlier in this letter. If I prosecuted this offence it is likely to lead to lengthy legal proceedings in which the background to the case would have to be visited as far as the sexual practises that led to and accompanied the infliction of the injuries. In my opinion it is not in the public interest to pursue this charge in isolation."

4.1.4.4 If the CPS will not prosecute the existing law because they fear it will be overturned, then parliament must step in.

4.2 Under prosecution of violence claimed to be consensual

4.2.1 Serious and sustained violence recast as something you can consent to

It is worth facing the fact that the violence used, and the injuries resulting, in “rough sex” cases can be appallingly severe.

¹¹ R v Brown; Herring, Landmark Cases in Criminal Law

¹² Flogging live complainants and dead horses: we may no longer need to be in bondage to Brown, Murphy

¹³ <https://barristerblogger.com/2020/03/05/the-harman-amendment-legislation-as-gesture-politics-leads-to-bad-law/>

¹⁴ <https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/nclr/2014/03/06/r-v-brown-where-are-we-now/>

¹⁵ <http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/app/uploads/2016/08/No.139-Criminal-Law-Consent-in-the-Criminal-Law-A-Consultation-Paper.pdf>

¹⁶ From CPS letter to a victim, also quoted in the [Sunday Times 31 May 2020](#)

- 4.2.1.1 In these recent cases the women have been beaten with a boot, punched in the face so that her jaw was broken, beaten resulting in a shoulder dislocation, strangled, often to unconsciousness, asphyxiated with a plastic bag, waterboarded, having bleach applied to her face, being stabbed or shot, having objects inserted in her vagina or anus resulting in her lifechanging or fatal injury. In this latter the women are unconscious, drugged, or highly intoxicated.
- 4.2.1.2 Through the rough sex claim, these acts of sustained violence can be recast as consensual.
- 4.2.1.3 In the killing of Hannah Pearson, who was 16 when she met the man who killed her later that day, the man who killed her started to “lightly” strangle her “which she did not object to” before strangling her more forcefully. This man was also described as “obsessed with strangulation” and strangulation porn, and “enjoying the sensation of strangling women during sex”, and that he would¹⁷ do this without asking and see if women objected.
- 4.2.1.4 Research suggests that strangulation can cause loss of consciousness within 4-10 seconds.¹⁸ Morton took 20 minutes after she is likely to have died to call for help, earlier destroying Hannah’s phone when it rang.
- 4.2.1.5 Morton was found guilty of manslaughter – the judge warned him that *“Hannah did not give valid and informed consent to this escalated activity in the knowledge that it carried the risk of some bodily injury”* and *“She had never been involved in such activity before, was very intoxicated and, if not totally unconscious, then certainly confused and not thinking straight. She was in no position to object, trapped underneath you whilst you strangled her”* him to 12 years.”
- 4.2.1.6 And in Meachen [2006], a man on trial of GBH with intent was told by the judge that he could not use a consent defence to GBH, after which he plead guilty. He later appealed successfully, as he would have claimed that she consented and that he did not foresee the injury to her. The woman was left with lifechanging internal injuries, including the use of a colostomy bag.
- This recasting can be effective – meaning that courts accept there was no intent to cause GBH or to kill, attempted murder prosecution may be dropped because her injuries were said, by him, to be sustained accidentally as part of a sexual fantasy of being held at gunpoint¹⁹. And so there is a strong incentive for defendants to present their use of violence as consensual: reasonable, because it is what she wanted.

¹⁷ <https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/nottingham-news/dead-girl-16-strangled-man-163518>

¹⁸De Boos 2019, summarised in [Bichard et al, 2020](#):

¹⁹ Jeffers, 2013

4.2.2 Sexual and sadistic violence recast as sex that the woman wanted

4.2.2.1 Extraordinarily, the latest Femicide Census²⁰ catalogued eight women killed in sexually sadistic homicides in 2018. **Six of those eight men accused of sexually sadistic homicides in 2018 used a 'rough sex' defence.** Murder involving sexual or sadistic conduct has a 30 year minimum life term starting point²¹ so there is a strong incentive to rebrand this conduct as consensual.

4.2.2.2 In Portwine [2003] the alleged consent of the woman he murdered was the basis for a successful appeal of the original judge's use of the sexually violent conduct as an aggravating factor in sentencing. Lee Portwine killed Una Whitney after arguing and with a history of domestic violence - the Crown and original trial accepted his claim that the activity between them was consensual (including his insertion of "woodland debris" to complete or near complete obstruction of her airways - the details are awful and are in the attached) and the appeal court decided *"in our view, that the appellant and the victim indulged in perverted behaviour, to which the victim consented, is not an aggravating feature, even though it merited the description "degrading"*. And accepted that there was no intent to kill. His sentence was reduced on appeal from 16 to 12 years.

4.2.3 Strangulation and asphyxiation is widespread and widely underprosecuted

4.2.3.1 Strangulation and asphyxiation is an overwhelming feature of the homicides claimed to be rough sex – around two thirds of those women have been strangled.

4.2.3.2 More widely, it is a significant component of sexual assaults, with 10% of women attending a Sexual Assault Referral Centre²² reporting they'd been strangled. And domestic abuse: Refuge found²³ that 48% of the women seeking their help had been strangled, choked or suffocated. Then with potentially 2 million²⁴ UK women who have already experienced strangulation assaults in sex, this is a major issue, and not only in domestic abuse: a third of women who have experienced non-consensual violence in sex say they'd just met the perpetrator that day²⁵. Not all these women are going to police, although anecdotally we hear of a huge increase in reports of this to police.

Strangulation is widely underprosecuted²⁶ in cases seen by domestic abuse support services, and one judge telling the Centre for Women's Justice that "a significant number of domestic abuse cases before the Magistrates' Courts include some element of non-fatal strangulation which are charged as the summary offence of common assault instead of the more appropriate offence of ABH."

²⁰ [Femicide Census of 2018 - February 2020](#)

²¹ [Section 5 of Schedule 21 of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act](#)

²² [Non-fatal strangulation amongst clients attending Saint Mary's SARC](#) White, Majeed-Ariss., 2018

²³ [Refuge Annual Report, 2016-2017](#)

²⁴ WCCTT Analysis 2020, referencing [BBC/Comres](#) 2019 research on women's experience of violence in sex

²⁵ Snow, L. (2020) Survey on women's experiences of non-consensual violence in sex (*unpublished*, in partnership with WCCTT)

²⁶ [Domestic Abuse bill, the need for an offence of non-fatal strangulation](#); Centre for Women's Justice 2020

4.2.3.3 Too many of the claimed “consensual” non-fatal assaults we see in our research have strangulation prosecuted as common assault or more often not at all. In one case²⁷ the accused admitted he strangled his girlfriend – “*Her idea was to involve the violence with the sex. She insisted on strangulation. She just wanted more and more and more*”. She said she thought her eyes might pop out – and did not agree that she’d asked for this. He was not prosecuted for strangulation and was found not guilty of all charges which were brought - wounding and threats to kill - at court.

4.2.3.4 In fact, strangulation or asphyxiation has been prosecuted in only three of the non-fatal assaults we’ve found:

- In Dakin [2017] it was prosecuted as common assault – not ABH as recommended by the CPS.
- In Price [2017], a woman was strangled and bitten and the accused prosecuted for common assault.
- In Dixon [2013] prosecution for GBH was successful, although this assault was astonishingly severe: a woman in prostitution was strangled with a lace or cord until he thought she was dead, he drove around to dump her body in a ditch, only for her to wake up, in the ditch. She had been caused brain damage by the strangulation, and no account was taken of this, or the traumatic effect of strangulation, in the court’s assessment of her behaviour afterwards where she went to his house and drank with him. He was found not guilty of GBH with intent, rape and sexual assault, claiming he was inspired by TV’s *Diary of a Call Girl* and that she’d consented to strangulation for “an extra £10”. He was sentenced to 2 years.

4.2.4 Women reporting strangulation told by police: “you could have consented”

4.2.4.1 Women have told us they’ve reported strangulation to police, only to have officers question if they had asked for it, as “it’s something you can consent to”. We have so far been contacted by women who have heard this from officers in four police forces.

4.2.4.2 The women have been reporting strangulation in both rape, and in sex that was consensual until they were strangled.

4.2.5 Additional violence not charged in sexual assault cases

4.2.5.1 Sexual assault including rape may be accompanied with substantial violence (e.g. hitting, slapping, punching, asphyxiation and strangulation, wounding). When prosecuted as sexual assault, consent is a defence, and defendants will claim and supply evidence that the women consented to both sex and to the violence. “Rough sex” has been claimed as an excuse for rape for decades²⁸, to explain away the force used. It is now²⁹ regularly used to explain violent injury in rape.

4.2.5.2 Our research suggests that in cases of sexual assault, additional violence is often not prosecuted and only rape or sexual assault charges pursued.

4.2.5.3 Combined with new lows³⁰ in successful prosecutions of rapes, this means that even admitted violence is not successfully prosecuted.

4.2.5.4 We do not know to what extent the CPS’s belief that consent could be allowed as a defence to serious assault in future influences the decision not to prosecute this additional violence separately, or in isolation.

4.2.5.5 A woman who approached our campaign had reported six rapes to police. The man accused claimed that this was consensual rough sex, including the strangulation and beating, that she’d asked for. The CPS did not charge him with assaults relating to strangulation or the beating, and the rape charges they did bring were later dropped. This is her³¹ experience:

4.2.5.6 I am lucky to be alive. Unlike so many women, I survived a brutal and sustained attack in which a man I knew raped, beat and strangled me. I was 25 years old at the time, and my enduring memory is of the moment I realised that if I didn’t get his hands from around my neck, I would die. I know now that there were only a few moments between the time he seized my throat and my starting to lose consciousness. The terror quickly fades, as does the sight of the face of man killing you, and for me, the realisation that I was dying was followed by an overwhelming sense of peace. Then he let go, and laughed at me. After a point, fighting back becomes impossible. After months of investigation, my attacker was finally charged with two counts of rape. There was no mention, or consideration, of the strangulation or beating. Which, like all of it, he told them I’d ‘asked for’. When the rape charges against him was eventually dropped by the CPS, it meant that there was no further recourse for me. I know now that the CPS will go for the highest possible charge, often neglecting charges for lesser or other connected offences. **This had the effect that my rapist, and the man who nearly killed me, walked free without so much as a mark against his name, even though substantial evidence exists of extreme strangulation.** One day, I will receive a phone call to tell me he has killed someone.

4.2.5.7 In the “rough sex” non-fatal assault cases included in [Section 6](#), those prosecuted as rapes or sexual assaults rarely have additional violence prosecuted.

4.2.5.8 We Can't Consent To This have also heard from women who say that their previous consent to "rough sex" (for example slapping in consensual sex, or use of handcuffs) has been viewed by police and CPS as something that will be presented in court, and which will undermine the likelihood that jury will convict for rape, including rape with additional violence used.

4.3 The embedded myth that women really do die in fatal "sex"

4.3.1.1 In some of the homicides, perpetrators were not initially prosecuted because police³², crime scene officers³³, or pathologists³⁴ believed that the death was a "sex game" accident.

4.3.1.2 A witness in one of the homicides contacted us. She understood from police in that case that it was the CPS who came up with the "manslaughter in a sex game gone wrong" presentation – even though no one, including the accused, had till then described it as such. She said "It was a way of blaming everyone and no one". In this case the accused was prosecuted for manslaughter and found not guilty at trial.

4.3.1.3 And in the homicide of Laura Hutson, the judge sentenced the defendant to 6 years, saying he showed remorse and had killed Laura "by stabbing her through the neck during bizarre and violent sadomasochistic sexual activity". He had cut her throat using "mild to moderate force". Earlier that day he'd strangled Laura, and was later sentenced for another strangulation assault on a woman. As Laura's sister Cara said "*How can someone believe that it's manslaughter?*"³⁵

4.4 Previous sexual history used in court in defence to charges of violence

4.4.1 Sexual History used as evidence in Non-fatal Assault cases

In Wilkins, [2018], the accused plead guilty to assault causing ABH at court. The victim had substantial injuries and neighbours had called police - she had a bloodied nose, a swollen left cheek, red marks around her neck, hair pulled from her scalp and a minor shoulder dislocation. Despite the guilty plea, very detailed evidence was presented in court to support the idea that he had believed her to be consenting, including video evidence shown of her naked and them having sex with some (allegedly consensual) slapping and punching, the detail of her texted fantasies ("she asked to be kidnapped and tied to a tree"). This, and the fact that during the assault she had failed to use the safe word that the couple had agreed for sex was taken into account by the judge in giving a suspended rather than custodial sentence, saying "**The two of you behaved very irresponsibly that day and night, then you started beating her up... you did not even realise that she was not consenting**".

And all of this was reported in news reports.

²⁷Elliot, 2019

²⁸ "Rapist is jailed for six years. Beast claimed his 20 year old victim enjoyed rough sex". 29 December 1989, Hammersmith & Shepherd's Bush Gazette; "Rape Charge Denied: told a court how she enjoyed having rough sex with him on the night of the alleged events" 10 September 1998 Reading Evening Post

²⁹ A solicitor who works with rape complainants told WCCTT she sees many cases where rough sex is claimed to explain the injuries in rape cases.

³⁰ [High Court: EAW faces CPS in court](#) EAW March 2020

³¹ As told to We Can't Consent To This, May 2020

³² Lesley Potter's death not investigated as a crime until her husband confessed.

³³ The crime scene officer in the murder of Kerry Goddard was fired from his role, after going along with Kerry's husband's claim that she died in a sex accident.

³⁴ The pathologist in the murder of Sally White was disciplined for assuming her death had been a sex game accident – Sally's killer went on to murder at least two other women before he was arrested and Sally's death reinvestigated.

³⁵ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10371066/grace-millane-sister-killer-death-rough-sex-defence/>

4.4.2 Sexual History used as evidence in Homicides

4.4.2.1 In the majority of these homicides, the victim's alleged sexual history, even with previous partners, is part of the evidence presented in court to support her supposed consent. These, along with her name, are widely reported in the press. Even in homicide cases where the criminal justice outcome could be said to be adequate, this brings a terrible toll on the families.

4.4.2.2 The man who killed Charlotte Teeling was found guilty of her murder, sentenced taking account of the sexual and sadistic conduct, and the judge acknowledged that Charlotte did not consent, and even if she had, she could not consent to be harmed. But the defence's use of Charlotte's alleged consent brought a great toll on her family. Her brother Thomas said "***in court they had to trawl through my sister's sex life and she wasn't there to speak out against it. Everyone just assumed that my sister was into stuff like that. I was so close to my sister and I knew she wasn't like that at all. It made losing her a million times worse..***"³⁶

4.4.2.3 And that previous sexual history may be part of the justification for a lighter sentence – like in the killing of Natalie Connolly, where the judge accepted her consent to beating and insertion of a trigger spray carpet cleaner, even despite her being so intoxicated that she was slurring and "falling down drunk". This level of intoxication would have been taken as affecting her capacity to consent to sex, were this a rape case³⁷.

4.4.3 No anonymity for victims

4.4.3.1 As Charlotte Teeling's brother says above, the families of homicide victims are deeply affected by the news reporting of the claims of the accused, uncritically repeated in headlines. Even decades later, those headlines and news stories remain. Lindsey, the sister of Vicky Wynne Jones said of the man who killed her: "*He took away Vicky, her choices, her chances, her future. And then he took her dignity. Even now, it's the 'sex game gone wrong' that gets focused on. Even though it was disproved, it's always going to be there.*"³⁸

4.4.3.2 Proposed amendments to protect anonymity of victims in domestic homicides will be welcome. But in cases of non-fatal assault, women's names and sexual histories can still be reported along with lurid claims they asked for the violence. In Elliot [2017], the victim was named in news reports, along with his claim she had "insisted on strangulation" as part of a "weird sex game":

4.4.3.3 "She said she wanted to try some new sex stuff. It got really weird. I did not know what to think. From there it just got violent. Her idea was to involve the violence with the sex. She insisted on strangulation. She just wanted more and more and more."³⁹

4.4.3.4 None of the charges (wounding with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, unlawful wounding and making a threat to kill) were sexual offences, and she was named in local *and* national press reports. He was found not guilty of all charges – note that he was not charged with strangulation despite seemingly admitting to it.

4.4.3.5 Similarly, in Wilkins [2018] the victim was named in all news reports, along with photographs of her, and detail of her assault and previous sexual history. He was charged with and pleaded guilty to ABH. In Price [2015], the victim was choked and repeatedly bitten. She said "she could not get him off her" after he took hold of her by the neck and started choking her. She reported to police and he was prosecuted for common assault – her name and alleged liking for rough sex was published in national newspapers along with photos of her. This liking was supported by evidence that she had sent "flirty texts" to the defendant.

³⁶ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11097472/charlotte-teeling-brother-50-shades-sex-defence/>

³⁷ "Prosecutors and investigators should consider whether supporting evidence is available to demonstrate that the complainant was so intoxicated that he/she had lost their capacity to consent." [CPS Legal Guidance, Rape and Sexual Offences](#)

³⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jul/25/fatal-hateful-rise-of-choking-during-sex>

³⁹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/man-cleared-slashing-girlfriend-stamping-20813532>

5 How the success of rough sex claims may be brought to an end

5.1.1.1 There is widespread and pervasive belief that women can consent to serious violence, that violence can be recast as consensual, as sex, even where the woman is able to say she did not want it. **The case law is not up to the task – the CPS will not prosecute it, police do not apply it, and there is essentially no public understanding: particularly given the high profile given to cases where the claim has resulted in a manslaughter charge and a light sentence.** We have identified that “rough sex” claims are used, successfully, to evade justice at every stage: from officers and crime scene team who believe it was an accident, to judges allowing for her alleged consent in sentencing.

5.1.1.2 The following key areas need to be addressed by any proposal:

- Statutory provision is needed to ensure that you cannot consent to serious injury or death. The CPS fear the existing law will be rolled back, and subsequent case law has diluted the effect of Brown.
- Even where judges disallow consent defences, a reasonable belief in consent can still form part of favourable sentencing –even where the woman assaulted says she did not consent. And her consent is accepted in sentencing in homicides.
- Victims in non-fatal assaults and homicides must be protected from having their sexual history used in court. This should apply to assaults from common assault right up to murder.
- Victims of non-fatal assaults and homicides must be protected by anonymity, to ensure their alleged consent is not published widely and permanently in the news.
- Strangulation is undercharged as common assault or not charged at all. We call for a freestanding strangulation offence to ensure this is prosecuted as the serious assault it is.
- Consent as defence in cases of common assault has not been included as part of the amendments to date. Victims in these cases must be protected from having their sexual histories presented in court, and this and their names reported in press.
- Violence, even admitted violence, is being undercharged. Especially in cases of sexual assault including rape, where the low rate of prosecutions means that all charges are dropped.
- The police and CPS have declined to prosecute rape where the victim has previously consented to some “rough sex”, like slapping or use of handcuffs.
- If police and prosecutors won’t prosecute violence which may be claimed as rough sex, how will the now millions⁴⁰ of women who’ve been violently assaulted in sex be well served by the justice system?
- Challenging embedded myths in the criminal justice system, that women die through sex, and that consent to one thing is consent to violent assault.
- Data on the use of these claims, and the reporting of violence in sex must be collected and analysed to measure the effectiveness of law and policy changes.

⁴⁰ Estimated 3.6 million UK women under 40 have been experienced strangulation/choking, gagging, spitting or slapping in (til then) consensual sex. 2 million of them have experienced strangulation/choking. Source: WCCTT Analysis 2020, referencing [BBC/Comres 2019 research on women’s experience of violence in sex](#)

5.2 The scope of the DA Bill amendments can only go so far:

5.2.1.1 We support the intention of the amendments NC4 – NC11 proposed to the Domestic Abuse bill by MPs Harriet Harman, Laura Farris and Mark Garnier, which can be summarised as:

- Replacing the Brown decision with specific statutory provision – that you cannot consent to injury or death.
- Introducing prosecution steps for DPP referral and consultation with families before lesser charges are pursued in a homicide.
- Introducing a non-fatal strangulation offence that reflects the seriousness of this assault.
- Introducing anonymity requirements and protection against the use of sexual history in court for homicides.

5.2.1.2 **But the Government can go further – and must, if the successful use of rough sex claims are to be ended.** The Domestic Abuse bill is the right bill to do make change – but its scope will not include all women killed and injured in violence it's claimed they asked for. Additional provision will be needed after this bill to ensure those who have just met their perpetrators, or who are otherwise not personally connected, are protected.

In around half of “sex game” homicides, the women would not be protected by the proposals as they had just met, were neighbours of or were only acquainted with the men who killed them.

5.2.1.3 Although ABH and above should be covered by the Brown decision, and by the amendments proposed to the DA Bill⁴¹ consent would continue to be a defence for common assault. At a minimum, the victims in common assault cases should be protected from having their name and sexual history published in newspapers as justification for their alleged consent. We reiterate that we can find no cases of common assault which have a victim who agrees they consented.

5.2.1.4 **And only the Government can drive change needed at every stage of the criminal justice system: from policing response through to sentences given to men convicted of violence claimed consensual. “Rough sex” claims are increasingly part of violent assault and killing of women – law change is needed but law change alone cannot fix this. We also believe that to date relatively few of the 3.6million UK women violently assaulted in sex have reported this to the police – the criminal justice system must be ready to respond to them when they do.**

5.3 Data Collection and monitoring of outcomes

5.3.1.1 The data collection and analysis of rough sex claims has been carried out by We Can't Consent To This – a voluntary campaign organisation. Even within the year since our research first began to be published, some source data is no longer publicly available – particularly news reporting on assaults which resulted in a not guilty verdict.

5.3.1.2 It will be vitally important to monitor the effect of measures to end rough sex claims – it cannot be left to us to carry out this monitoring. The Government has a number of data sources to draw on to monitor the use of consent claims – and can do this for relatively low implementation cost. After all, We Can't Consent To This are currently collecting and analysing this data for *no* cost.

5.3.1.3 The Government has already made good progress in introducing data collection and analysis for domestic abuse, and the CPS publishes summary data as part of their VAWG Report⁴² – although they acknowledge a number of source data deficiencies⁴³. But further work will be needed to identify the scale of violent assault women are now experiencing in consensual sex and the response they get if they report this, identify if undercharging of violence is as common outside of rough sex claims as it seems to be in it, and measuring whether rough sex claims are still being used to evade justice.

⁴¹ Currently NC4 – NC11 - [Notice of Amendments to 20th May 2020](#)

⁴² [CPS VAWG Report 2019](#)

⁴³ For instance: for some offences like sexual offences (although not rape), harassment and stalking, the CPS have no data on whether the victim was male or female as source systems do not collect complainant data. CPS VAWG Report 2019

6 Non-Fatal Assaults where consent to violence is claimed

This section includes detail on a sample of 30 of the recent criminal cases in England and Wales where consent to violence is claimed, focusing on the last ten years. These sample cases have 34 female victims, and are a sample of the 67 cases of non-fatal assault we have found since 2010, and 115 since 1997.

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
1999	Emmett ⁴⁴	“the defendant poured lighter fuel on his partner’s breasts and set them alight, causing severe third-degree burns in a 24 cm squared area. He also put a plastic bag over her head and tightened it to the point that she could no longer endure the pain and was unable to communicate with him.” ⁴⁵	“the victim went to see her doctor, who informed the police. She refused to give evidence in his defence. The only person who knew her side of the story was the doctor and it is revealing that they decided to breach the duty of confidentiality that normally applies to doctor/patient communications and inform the police. While we cannot know the truth, there must be a strong suspicion that this was simply a case of domestic violence to which the defendant gave the only defence he could: she wanted it” ⁴⁶	Sentenced to 18 months for 2 counts of ABH. Appeal unsuccessful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widely interpreted as confirming the ruling in Brown – despite the fact that only his story that she consented was presented.
2006	Meachen	After meeting they had gone to her home – he had caused her anal injuries so severe that she had a colostomy bag fitted. She remembered nothing of the assault and prosecution put the case that she had been unconscious. He claimed she had taken GHB willingly and had consented to the acts which caused her the injury.	They had met at a nightclub.	Convicted of GBH – succeeded at appeal because trial judge advised he could not use consent as a defence to the GBH charge, but he did not accept that he had foreseen or intended any bodily injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeal judgement interpreted as meaning that consent is a defence where injury was not certain, and could be said that the accused didn’t foresee it or intend it. Victim left with life changing injuries. Her capacity for consent – she may have been unconscious, and was certainly drugged with GHB not explicitly considered.

⁴⁴ <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/1999/1710.html>

⁴⁵ R v Brown; Herring, Landmark Cases in Criminal Law

⁴⁶ ibid

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2009	Armstrong ⁴⁷	He raped two women in a park - the first was beaten so badly that her flesh was in her hair. He claimed that she had gone to the park to have rough sex with him.	One woman grabbed as she walked past, another had met him in the pub.	Prosecuted for 2 offences of rape, plead guilty at court and sentenced to five and a half years with indeterminate sentence for public protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape prosecution with additional violence (and sex) claimed to be consensual. • Told police injuries and rape of first victim due to rough sex, before pleading guilty • Had just met and so would not be covered by DA Bill. • Not prosecuted for additional violence
2013	Lock ^{48, 49}	<p>He beat her with a rope leaving her with severe bruising. He said this was part of a master/slave arrangement, inspired by 50 Shades of Grey". She said he also put a rope around her neck and pulled it tight, and that when he beat her she screamed in pain, afterwards messaging a friend to call police. He denied putting the rope around her neck despite her having bruising around her neck.</p> <p>He was prosecuted for a single count of ABH.</p>	Court heard they'd taken part in bondage and threesomes and had filmed themselves having sex.	<p>Jury found him Not Guilty of ABH.</p> <p>His defence counsel said in court "The issue is 'did she consent and did Mr Lock believe that she consented?'. "Is this an assault any more than a mistimed tackle in football</p> <p>Lock was later convicted of assaulting his next partner – his seventh conviction for domestic violence.⁵⁰</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial evidence of their sex life (including her consent to "bondage") in court case. • Defence able to present this as a question of consent and reasonable belief in consent.

⁴⁷ <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/vicious-sex-attacker-jailed-1-198794>

⁴⁸ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/steven-lock-cleared-of-assault-during-1549959>

⁴⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-21145816>

⁵⁰ <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/ipswich-fifty-shades-of-grey-case-jeweller-is-jailed-after-throwing-his-latest-partner-around-like-a-rag-doll-1-3639799>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2013	Dixon ^{51, 52}	He strangled a woman with a leash or cord, causing her brain damage. He claimed she had consented to do this for an extra £10, and that he was copying the tv programme "Diary of a Call Girl". The woman woke in a ditch, where he had driven to dump her body, thinking her dead. He claimed to be pleased that she had woken – and took her to his home. She thought she had been raped while unconscious, He was charged with rape, sexual assault, GBH with intent	They'd just met – she was in prostitution. He said he'd paid her for everything. She went to his home after regaining consciousness in the ditch and drank wine with him. She had suffered brain damage at this point from the strangulation.	Cleared of all the charges after a four-day trial, the second he has faced, but was convicted of an alternative count of GBH and was jailed for two years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 year sentence for this assault. • Her behaviour after the strangulation used to support idea it wasn't a serious assault • No mention of Brown
2015	Wright ⁵³	Subjected an 18 year old girl to an extended assault where he repeatedly hit her with a cane and his hand, threatened her whilst she wept.	She was 18 and had been texting him – prosecution admitted "He told her he was in charge and he could do what he liked to her. The woman did reply and did not ignore the texts."	Plead guilty to ABH at court. Sentenced to a 1-year community order. Judge in sentencing accepts that Wright had thought "everybody was consenting"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision in Brown is alluded to – judge in sentencing says "consent is not a defence." But the accused's belief in consent seems to be taken account of in sentencing.
2015	Lower ⁵⁴	Rape. Strangled her to unconsciousness, and also put a pillow over her head and poured water over her face- "waterboarding"	Policeman – victim was a teenager in prostitution.	Not Guilty of all charges bar ABH for kicking her – sentenced to 150 hours of community service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in a relationship and would not be in scope of DA Bill.
2015	Price ^{55, 56}	In consensual sex, he began to repeatedly bite her, he pulled her hair, he grabbed her by the neck and started choking her.	They had been in an intimate relationship. His defence described them exchanging flirty texts, and "rough and playful sex was part of their relationship"	Found guilty by magistrates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strangulation charged as common assault • Common Assault charge to which consent is a defence • He was charged with common assault so her sexual history presented in court • Common assault charge meant her name and sexual history (and photos from social media) published in news

⁵¹ <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/9173485.fishburn-man-inspired-sadomasochism-sharon-stone-billie-piper/>

⁵² <https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/local-news/call-girl-throttled-client-court-3684921>

⁵³ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/bricklayer-who-tied-up-woman-5437699>

⁵⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-34942197>

⁵⁵ <https://metro.co.uk/2015/06/25/student-convicted-of-assault-after-he-bit-his-lovers-bum-during-rough-sex-5264905/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/11697752/Student-prosecuted-for-biting-woman-on-her-bottom-during-sex.html>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2015	D'Ambrosia ⁵⁷	Prosecuted with rape and assault by beating (an alternate charge to sexual assault). Based on appeal judgment, she said she'd been violently raped including use of a bat and a knife. He claimed it was consensual rough sex – that she was a dominatrix, that she'd assaulted a friend, and that he was a “mild humble person” (in the words of the appeal judgement).	They were in a relationship.	Convicted of rape and assault by beating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape prosecution where he attempted to explain additional violence as “rough sex”
2016	Graham ^{58, 59}		He was a police officer.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape with additional violence not charged Not charged with assault relating to strangulation
2016	Purewal ⁶⁰	He bit her hands and stabbed her in the head with a pair of keys. Told police that the injuries to her body were from rough sex.	Ex partners - she had asked him to return a set of house keys when he let himself in. She was scared so let him stay the night – the assault followed the next morning.	Plead guilty to ABH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Told police injuries due to rough sex, before pleading guilty Rough sex claim dropped at court but part of defence to that point – and news reporting. Victim named in news reporting.
2016	Parry ⁶¹	She had a bruised face, clumps of hair had been pulled out - he claimed due to “rough sex” – and she had a broken arm which he claimed was due to her falling over.	They had been in a relationship although had split up. There was a restraining order against him approaching her, and he had “a dreadful record” according to this trial judge.	He was convicted of breaching the restraining order, but his trial for GBH was abandoned when the victim did not appear to give evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Told police her injuries due to rough sex. Substantial Domestic Abuse history
2016	Bardary ⁶²	He bit her repeatedly. Admitted assault by beating a magistrates – her alleged consent, and her name, published in news.	They were colleagues and had been drinking – they went back to his home and had sex.	Plead guilty at magistrates, £250 fine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not in a relationship and so not fully in scope of Domestic Abuse bill. Victim named in reporting with his story that “she came on strong” Common assault charge – so consent would be a defence - although he plead guilty.

⁵⁷ Appeal judgement: R v D'Ambrosia 2015 <https://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/format.cgi?doc=/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2015/182.html>

⁵⁸ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3629068/Police-officer-recorded-raping-woman-pleaded-stop-installed-sleep-app-iPhone.html>

⁵⁹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/police-officer-caught-raping-woman-8130602>

⁶⁰ <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2016/10/30/father-stabbed-ex-in-the-forehead-in-front-of-children/>

⁶¹ <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/15955159.wrexham-man-cleared-of-charge-of-gbh-on-former-partner/>

⁶² <https://courtnewsuk.co.uk/top-wine-waiter-shopped-biting-womans-arms-sex/>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2016	Hapek ^{63, 64}	He raped her – spat in her face, slapped her, tied her hands with a towel. He claimed this was part of sexual role play and that she liked rough sex.	Unclear – likely to have been strangers.	Guilty of two counts of rape, sentenced to 16 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape prosecution where he attempted to explain additional violence as “rough sex” Rape charges to which consent is defence Not charged with assault [slapping, spitting] despite saying he did it.
2016	Whitaker ⁶⁵	Severe beating with a dog lead “She had received bruises all over her body, cuts to the arms and elbows. The inside of her mouth was cut due to him placing his hand over her mouth to stop her screaming”. He claimed that the bruises on her body were from rough sex, not an assault.	They were in a relationship,. He had previously been imprisoned for assault by beating against her – and had a 12 month restraining order to stop him approaching her. They had restarted the relationship but she ended it the month of this new assault.	Plead guilty to two counts of ABH and one of breaching a restraining order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Told police injuries due to rough sex, before pleading guilty Substantial Domestic Abuse history
2016	Kibirige ⁶⁶	She said he put his hands round her neck and she was too scared to shout for help. Her not shouting for help was presented in defence as evidence that she consented. He was charged with four counts of rape, attempted rape, sexual assault and another serious sexual assault.	They’d connected on Tinder and had exchanged Whatsapp messages for two weeks before he went over to hers to watch a film. They’d been kissing when he put his hands round her neck.	Not Guilty of all charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape and sexual assault charges to which consent is defence Not charged with strangulation Not charged with assault (strangulation) despite saying he did it (although he claimed at her behest).

⁶³ <https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/court-told-alleged-rape-victim-had-fantasised-about-having-sex-with-a-stranger-1-5238735>

⁶⁴ <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/bury-st-edmunds-man-krzysztof-hapek-handed-16-year-jail-term-for-raping-woman-1-5304848>

⁶⁵ Appeal: R v Whitaker, 2017

⁶⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-37021841>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2017	Jones67	The woman returned from taking her child to school to discover her ex partner in her home. He said he wanted to get back together and when she declined he dragged her by the hair, punched her in the head, kicked her repeatedly in the body, leaving her with "serious injuries" and clumps of flesh missing. she thought she was going to die and was saved when a neighbour intervened. He told police that she had received injuries during rough sex bondage sessions.	Ex partner – he had a previous conviction for assaulting her. He had previous convictions for violence and disorder and had a previous court order to stay away from her.	He dropped his claim that she had consented to the violence at trial, and plead guilty to assault, occasioning actual bodily harm, and being in breach of a criminal behaviour order not to contact her. Jailed for 14 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial Domestic Abuse history. • Told police injuries due to rough sex, before pleading guilty • Rough sex claim dropped at court but part of defence to that point – and news reporting.
2017	Dakin68	Asphyxiated her by dunking her face into the bath, and forced soap into her mouth. Claimed to police her injuries were from rough sex.	Ex partner – he had a previous conviction for assaulting her. He was charged with assault and with an assault of a neighbour.	Guilty – plead guilty at magistrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial Domestic Abuse history. • Victim named in reporting • Asphyxiation charged only as common assault. • Told police injuries due to rough sex, before pleading guilty • Rough sex claim dropped at court but part of defence to that point – and news reporting.
2017	Batten6970	He electrocuted her genitals with 240v – mains electricity - and was prosecuted for sexual assault. He claimed this was consensual. Also prosecuted for further assaults: pushing and headbutting her.	In a relationship. He had previously plead guilty to criminal damage charges of destroying her phone and taking a hammer to the wall of her home. She said she consented to some of the sex and violence in their relationship because he would call her boring and “a prude” if she didn’t comply.	Not Guilty on electrocution nor of pushing assaults. Jury reached no judgement on headbutt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecuted for sexual assault so consent was a defence. • Court heard substantial evidence on what she had previously consented to – and what she had allegedly done to him.

⁶⁷<https://www.northwaleschronicle.co.uk/news/15756539.caernarfon-man-jailed-after-falsely-claiming-assault-injuries-on-young-mum-were-down-to-rough-sex/>

⁶⁸<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/WOMAN+FEARED+SHE%27D+DROWN+AS+PARTNER+PUSHED+FACE+INTO+BATH.-a0513701725>

⁶⁹<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/sadomasochist-electrocuted-partner-through-vagina-10203022>

⁷⁰<https://www.thecomet.net/news/hitchin-sadomasochist-found-not-guilty-of-electrocuting-woman-s-genitals-during-sex-session-after-she-admits-to-carving-her-name-into-his-inner-thigh-with-stanley-knife-1-4988609>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2017	Morris7172	<p>At the woman's house, Morris subjected his victim to a prolonged beating where he hit her repeatedly about the face and head and strangled her to unconsciousness. She "woke to find Morris carrying out the sexual assault while he held her face down with his hand on her severely bruised face."</p> <p>He said "it was rough sex. She liked rough sex".</p>	They met at a swingers' club. He offered her a lift home.	Found guilty of rape and ABH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strangulation seems not to have been charged.

⁷¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-42416446>

⁷² <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/man-beat-twice-raped-woman-141073>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2017	Jeffers ⁷³	<p>Shot a woman in the vagina leaving her with life changing injuries – he claimed at her behest. He had his finger on the trigger and accepted he had intended to endanger her life– but it was “a consensual sexual encounter” according to the judge.</p> <p>Was prosecuted for attempted murder “But the charge was dropped after a court heard the victim had willingly taken part in a sexual fantasy.”⁷⁴</p> <p>At first he told police that she had pointed the weapon at herself before pulling the trigger, but later claiming her fantasy was to be held at gunpoint.</p>	<p>They had been in a sexual relationship. She suffered mental health impact and was not able to take part in the trial – but told hospital staff when admitted that he was “a bad man” and “he tried to blow my insides out”. She was left with catastrophic and lifechanging injuries. The evidence of her consent seems to have been the interpretation of a text message “dat ting you want up ya”.</p>	<p>Plead guilty to possession on firearm with intent to endanger life.</p> <p>Reduced on appeal to 8.5 years as she “had consented to this dangerous act” and had previously expressed sexual fantasy (according to appeal judge’s sentencing remarks – note that reported evidence only referred to the accused’s discussion off this, and she was not able to take part in the trial):</p> <p>On any view, his conduct here was extremely reckless and, by his plea, he accepted that it was his intention to endanger life. A sentence of the sort which the judge gave is, in our judgement, the sort of sentence that may be more likely to be imposed for possession of a gun in the context of serious criminal activity. “In this case, the context was a consensual sexual encounter. There was no background of criminality.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempted Murder prosecution dropped – apparently because she “had willingly taken part in a sexual fantasy” • Not prosecuted for bodily harm – only for possession of a firearm. • Victim’s (alleged) consent is also mitigation in sentencing (on appeal) – she was not able to give evidence in trial.

⁷³ <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/sentence-cut-leeds-man-jailed-after-woman-shot-genitals-sex-fantasy-game-went-wrong-301013>

⁷⁴ <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/sex-fantasy-game-went-wrong-woman-shot-genitals-leeds-man-hotel-room-52500>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2017	Lioce ^{75, 76}	She said he had pinned her down, slapped her, then with his hand over her mouth had raped her while saying "shut up bitch". He said this was all consensual - that she told him she liked rough sex, wanted to be slapped across the face and to be dominated. He was charged with two counts of rape and two of assault by penetration.	They had been on a date before heading back to his home. She said she did tell him during the date that she liked "rough sex". Afterwards she climbed onto some bins to get over the locked front gate of his home and flagged down a passing cyclist. He sent her abusive text messages after she left.	Not Guilty of all charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape and assault by penetration charges to which consent is defence • Not charged with assault [slapping] despite saying he did it.
2018	Hedley ⁷⁷	She wept in pain as he "violently grabbed her breast and also gripped her cheeks and spat in her mouth". He said this was all consensual "I'm just a normal man who has a little bit of spicy stuff."	Met on a dating website and went to a pub before going to his home. He was an ex police officer.	Not guilty of all charges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charged with sexual assault and common assault to which consent is a defence.

⁷⁵ <https://courtnewsuk.co.uk/italian-raped-woman-liked-rough-sex/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4689280/Ikea-worker-Diego-Lioce-26-cleared-rape.html>

⁷⁷ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/ex-detectives-fifty-shades-grey-11901989>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2018	Wilkins ^{78,79}	<p>Neighbours called police – she was found hiding in a bush in the street in only her bra. “She had injuries including a bloodied nose, a swollen left cheek, red marks around her neck, hair pulled from her scalp and a minor shoulder dislocation which required rest.”</p> <p>He admitted ABH at court – he denied prosecution’s claim that he had also repeatedly punched her and pulled her hair out inside their home. He said she hadn’t used the safety word, and he thought it was part of role play.</p>	<p>Had been dating - several videos of them having sex – including with slapping and punches – were shown in court, as were videos of her naked on a bed, and her “showing dismay” when a friend wasn’t invited into their bedroom. Her texted fantasy of being kidnapped was also part of evidence.</p> <p>They had a safety word for sex which she had not said during the assault.</p>	<p>Plead guilty to ABH at court Judge “asked to rule over the 2 versions of events.” “the judge said no one could be sure that Wilkins did not have the “honest perception” that it was aggressive sexual role play until it began to dawn on him that night”. "You are a grown man. What consenting adults do in private is their own business. "But you are responsible for yourself and those you engage with."</p> <p>Judge Eastel explained: "The two of you behaved very irresponsibly that day and night, then you started beating her up.. you did not even realise that she was not consenting, I accept you were horrified when you did." "An immediate prison sentence will not be the appropriate course."</p> <p>Was spared jail, but was sentenced to 12 months suspended for 2 years because ““you can never take a risk with consent ”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News reports clarify that “you cannot consent to serious injury” • Although he admitted ABH – consent was factor in sentencing and substantial evidence of other sexual history to support her consent was used in court. • No sexual assault charge – so her sexual history (in some detail) and name widely reported

⁷⁸ <https://www.louthleader.co.uk/news/crime/sleaford-man-court-over-rough-sex-injuries-handed-suspended-jail-term-judge-169185>

⁷⁹ <https://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/news/lincoln-news/court-punishes-man-assault-during-2349398>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2019	Elliot ^{80, 81}	Police were called by a neighbour who said he heard the accused say "Come back or I'll get a butcher's knife and skin you alive". Police found the victim bleeding heavily, with black eyes and a swollen face. She said she thought that her eyes might pop out when he strangled her. He was prosecuted for wounding with intent, wounding, and threats to kill.	They were in a relationship.	Jury found him Not Guilty of all charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim named in reporting with his story that she demanded the violence as part of rough sex. • Not prosecuted for strangulation. • Not charged with assault [in this case strangulation] despite admitting it.
2019	Read ^{82, 83, 84}	She said he put a plastic bag over her head, strangled her, he beat her so badly she thought she would die - "she picked up a letter belonging to Read and put it in her handbag so that police would realise where she had been if they found her body." He claimed she had asked him for rough sex including "pretend" strangulation. He was charged with attempted murder, wounding with intent, two offences of rape and one of false imprisonment..	They had met at a nightclub that evening, then went back to his. He was described as a "dad" in headlines. He had previous convictions for violence and "sex attacks on children, then left his victim lying in a pool of blood while he bathed, cleaned up and continued drinking for hours before he called 999".	Not Guilty of the charges which related to the "rough sex" claims: two rapes, attempted murder, false imprisonment. He admitted GBH in relation to a fight he said they had later. Sentenced to 14 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Guilty of the charges relating to rough sex. • Had just met – would not be in scope of Domestic Abuse bill

⁸⁰ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/man-slashed-lover-stamped-head-20751324>

⁸¹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/man-cleared-slashing-girlfriend-stamping-20813532>

⁸² <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/dad-accused-raping-trying-murder-16282048>

⁸³ <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/charming-thug-cleared-raping-trying-16310865>

⁸⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7677529/Man-37-jailed-14-years-using-saucepan-batter-woman-met-nightclub.html>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2019	Ellis ⁸⁵	Neighbour heard him say ""Get out you f*****g slut ... I'll f*****g kill you" – when police arrived she had severe injuries. She "could not open her eyes, had broken teeth, bruising to her arms and legs and was slipping out of consciousness. She had bald patches to her scalp and there were injuries over her entire body including her genital area." He told police she'd got these injuries through "consensual sexual role play" and that "she had asked him to do it."	They were ex-partners..	Plead Guilty to assault causing GBH and sentenced to 9 years 9 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Told police injuries due to rough sex, before pleading guilty Victim named in (this time sensitive) reporting
2020	Anokye ⁸⁶	Andy Anokye (aka Solo 45) charged and convicted of violent assaults against 4 women. A fifth woman also spoke to police who had been assaulted outside the UK. Anokye was convicted of waterboarding some of the women, holding a gun to a woman's head, putting bleach on their faces, punching, and multiple rapes. He claimed this was largely part of a "rape game" and was consensual.	Some of the women had just met him at the time of the assaults.	Guilty of 21 rapes, 5 counts of false imprisonment, 2 counts of assault by penetration and 2 of assault causing actual bodily harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charging primarily of rapes to which consent is a defence. Not all victims in a relationship and so would not be in scope of Domestic Abuse bill
2020	Smith ^{87,88,89}	She said he had choked, suffocated her, put his fingers down her throat, slapped and bit her. He was charged with well as sexual assault, assault by penetration and rape. He said it was mostly part of consensual rough sex, that she'd told him earlier that she like to take part in rough sex.	They had met at a nightclub and went outside to kiss. He was charged only with sexual assaults – not with separate violence.	Jury found him Not Guilty of all charges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charged only with rape and sexual assaults - to which consent is a defence. Strangulation/asphyxiation not prosecuted [note he seems to have denied doing this] Not prosecuted for assault [slapping] despite saying he did it.

⁸⁵ <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/abuser-jailed-after-left-ex-16176337>

⁸⁶ <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2020/03/solo-45-trial-grime-artist-convicted-of-21-rapes/>

⁸⁷ <https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/exmouth-rape-defendant-denies-alleyway-3915380>

⁸⁸ <https://eastdevonnews.co.uk/2020/03/02/exmouth-andrew-smith-man-accused-of-rape-says-woman-consented-to-sex/>

⁸⁹ <https://eastdevonnews.co.uk/2020/03/04/exmouth-man-andrew-smith-accused-of-rape-tells-court-woman-agreed-to-have-some-fun-in-alleyway/>

Year	Accused Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Observations
2020	Scott-O'Connor ^{90,91,92}	Charged with multiple counts of ABH and attempted strangulation with intent to commit a sexual offence. One of the victims was a 17-year old girl who had “bruising all over her body” and had been strangled almost to unconsciousness - he told police that she’d consented to “choking”.	They had just met on a date – he was described as obsessed with rape, strangulation, and torture. ⁹³	Jury found him guilty of all charges against the first victim, and all but one against the second, and he was sentenced to 17 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively rare prosecution of strangulation offences where consent is claimed.

⁹⁰ <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18168634.rape-fantasiist-neil-scott-oconnor-jailed-choking-women/>

⁹¹ <https://www.brightonandhove.news.org/2019/11/13/accused-sex-stranglers-girlfriend-describes-abusive-relationship/>

⁹² <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18168634.rape-fantasiist-neil-scott-oconnor-jailed-choking-women/>

⁹³ <https://www.sussex.police.uk/news/sussex/news/court-results/partridge-green-man-given-17-years-for-sex-offences/>

7 Fatal Assaults where consent to violence is claimed

Detail on selected homicides referred to in this document are given below. For a fuller list see <https://wecantconsenttothis.uk/>

Year	Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Key observations
2001	Goddard	He told ⁹⁴ detectives she “fell to her death through the floor of their loft during a sex game” and that marks found on her neck “could have been caused by erotic-asphyxiation.” The court heard ⁹⁵ much detail from Goddard on their alleged sex life. The crime scene officer first ⁹⁶ marked her death as a “sad accident”.	The victim was a music teacher, and mum of three, and was killed by her husband.	Murder, Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime scene officer believed the husband’s story that she died in a sex accident. • Victim’s (alleged) sexual history used in court, and published with her name.
2003	Hardy	The victim was murdered by Anthony Hardy, her neighbour. The pathologist on the case was later disciplined ⁹⁷ for deciding Sally had not died in suspicious circumstances, despite blood on her clothes, the bedding and wall, with injuries on her head and body ⁹⁸ ; despite her being found by accident by police, locked ⁹⁹ in a room in the home of a man who had a history of stalking and violence against women, who was ¹⁰⁰ a suspect in three rapes and who had recently been arrested. Sally was supposed to have died by “blocked arteries and shock generated by rough sex.”. The coroner was not told of the suspicious circumstances and so ruled the death was from natural causes. The police were then unable to investigate her death further.	The victim lived upstairs from the man who killed her.	Hardy went on to kill two other women. He claimed he had killed all three women by accident as part of a sex game - but at court admitted murdering them, and received three life sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathologist believed she’d died in a “sex accident” – police were unable to investigate further. • Hardy murdered at least 2 other women after he killed the victim.

⁹⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1796258.stm

⁹⁵ <https://www.crawleyobserver.co.uk/news/jailed-for-life-1-973448>

⁹⁶ <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2015/11/21/report-reveals-lies-of-crime-scene-officer/>

⁹⁷ <https://www.channel4.com/news/camden-ripper-pathologist-found-guilty-of-incompetence>

⁹⁸ <http://archive.camdennewjournal.com/news/2013/apr/were-these-first-victims-camden-ripper-channel-5-documentary-tonight-leading-criminolo>

⁹⁹ <http://courtnewsuk.co.uk/anthony-hardy/>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-202812/Camden-Ripper-jailed-life.html>

Year	Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Key observations
2016	Morton	Although the judge said ¹⁰¹ Morton had strangled the victim "without warning or permission", Morton claimed ¹⁰² he began to lightly strangle the her which he said she did not object to, before more forcefully strangling her. He waited 20 minutes after he saw she had stopped breathing to phone 999, and after smashing her phone because it was ringing	The victim met her killer, James Morton, 24, on the day she died. She was "heavily intoxicated" when she died, and Morton was sober and was reported as being <u>obsessed with strangulation</u> , frequently watching porn featuring strangulation of women.	The jury cleared him of murder and found him guilty of manslaughter. Manslaughter, 12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her consent – although “not valid and informed” – partially accepted by judge.
2018	Gaskell	Gaskell was charged with murder but admitted manslaughter. He had <u>strangled a woman 11 days</u> before he killed the victim, and was later given a 16 week sentence for that earlier attack. Gaskell held a knife to the victim’s neck while having sex - he claimed ¹⁰³ with her consent - and used mild to moderate force to cut through her carotid artery.	They had just met that day. He had earlier strangled her – she told a friend she thought she might die.	Court accepted guilty plea to Gross Negligence Manslaughter, and he was sentenced to 6 years. The court accepted that Gaskell, the only surviving witness, had not intended to use the knife to kill the victim and was engaged in what the Judge called ¹⁰⁴ “bizarre and violent sadomasochistic sexual activity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her consent accepted by judge. • Prosecuted for gross negligence manslaughter • Despite using force • Earlier strangulation of Laura not prosecuted
2018	Bailey	The victim was killed by a Richard Bailey, a man she had just met, and who had 171 previous convictions, including many for violence: "exclusively against women".	She was 26 and was mum to two children. She met the man who killed her that evening at a nightclub.	Murder, sentenced using 30 year life sentence starting point for sadistic and sexual conduct. Judge Patrick Thomas QC ruled that the murder involved "sexual or sadistic content and told Richard Bailey, "you told the police that [she] asked you to squeeze her neck. Even if that were the case - and I do not accept that it was - it is manifest that she did not consent to being injured, let alone killed."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge did not accept her consent in sentencing. • Her sexual history used in court, and published, with her name.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-40670225>

¹⁰² <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/ex-mcdonalds-worker-who-enjoyed-10834344>

¹⁰³ <https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/live-jason-gaskell-laura-huteson-1882468>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.thelawpages.com/court-cases/Jason-Gaskell-23619-3.law>

Year	Name	Nature of alleged assault	Context and relationship	Outcome	Key observations
2016	Broadhurst	The victim had ¹⁰⁵ suffered 40 separate injuries, including serious internal trauma, a fractured eye socket and facial wounds. Broadhurst claimed her injuries, including ¹⁰⁶ "dreadful blunt-force injuries to her head, buttocks and breast before spraying her face with bleach to clean off the blood" were from consensual "rough sex". The next morning, he ¹⁰⁷ "stepped across her now lifeless body, had breakfast, washed the car and called the emergency services, telling the police and paramedics that she was "dead as a doughnut".	She was 26 and was mum to a daughter, and a twin sister. She died with vaginal arterial bleeding and severe alcohol and cocaine intoxication at the bottom of the stairs of the home she shared with her partner of a few months, John Broadhurst, 36.	Plead guilty to Gross negligence manslaughter, 3 years 8 months. The Attorney General was asked to intervene in the sentence given, he declined ¹⁰⁸ . In 2019, Broadhurst attempted to have his sentence reduced further, as he'd been impaired by drink. He failed. ¹⁰⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecuted for manslaughter and not murder • Her consent accepted by the judge in sentencing • Short gross negligence manslaughter sentence • Victim's sexual history used in court – and widely published with her name
2018	Potter	On arrest and in court he claimed ¹¹⁰ that they had had an "S&M relationship", that she may have killed herself during sex, that he had ¹¹¹ strangled her during sex in the past, that he had a temper, that he had strangled his wife in temper before, maybe a couple of times, he had also held her by the throat in the pub. 'Police did not treat her death as suspicious until, one week before she was due to be cremated, Potter told ¹¹² a colleague "I had to strangle her".'	She was 66 had a son and a daughter and was looking forward to the birth of a sixth grandchild. She was killed by her husband..	Murder, 17 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial evidence of her alleged sex life heard in court and reported • He told police she'd died in suicide by hanging, possibly while masturbating. They did not investigate her death as suspicious.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/natalie-conolly-john-broadhurst-case-trial-murder-rough-sex-domestic-violence-manslaughter-a8690961.html>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/17226906.court-told-millionaire-john-broadhurst-killed-woman-during-violent-sex/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-10-02/debates/C3488538-CFEC-4670-9299-732672E2BE67/DomesticAbuseBill>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/staffordshire/south-staffordshire/2019/01/14/natalie-conolly-attorney-general-will-not-review-44-month-sentence-handed-to-killer-john-broadhurst/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2019/11/14/campaign-group-appalled-by-millionaire-killers-appeal-against-prison-sentence/>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-45960656>

¹¹¹ <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/live-updates-man-accused-strangling-15346811>

¹¹² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-45958063>