



When somebody does something bad to you.

When somebody does something bad to you, when they hurt you and scare you, you react in a way that is unique to you. It might not always make sense or even be right, but when you are young and you are scared you react in a way to minimize those feelings. For me that was denial, I didn't talk to people about it, I kept my pain and fear to myself. Being isolated and being scared became a way of life. Denial is a way to keep on living. If you convince yourself that you're alright, that you can take a course of antidepressants or drink yourself to sleep, the bad memories and pain will go away.

No one can prepare you for the time when you're not ok.

When you're breaking down at your desk in tears because you've seen the person who hurt you has hurt someone else.

No one can prepare you for the sad look in your partners face when you tell them about what happened to you, or the terror in your own voice when you recount what has happened over and over to doctors, therapists, police officers. No one can prepare you for the deadening, terrifying flatness that spreads through you as the truth dawns that it's too late to do anything. That because of you they've hurt other people and that you've left it too late to convict them. That things really aren't alright. That tablets aren't helping you to cope, and the fear is constant and forefront and that all the memories and feelings you have dredged up were for nothing.

No one can prepare you for that. But most people can empathise. The legal system can empathise, but at times I feel it has not.

Unexpected calls have been made on New Year's Eve and Easter Sunday, police officers have put cards through the door of my shared house with my full name written on them. When I have expressed fear, and fear is the right word, about my safety it has been dismissed. I understand procedures, I understand that certain things need to be done but at the same time I hoped to be treated with empathy and to have things explained and talked through with me.

That I could be treated as someone who is part of the process and someone that the legal system is working with, rather than being treated as an annoyance. I reported because I wanted to put what happened behind me and work toward the future.

Being raped was not a choice. Not reporting at the time was also not a choice. I cannot change what has happened and I can't go back in time to do anything differently.

Certain things that have been said and done during this process which have insulted and desperately depressed me.

It has placed a massive shadow over what should have been a forward looking year of my life. There has not been a moment when this process has not been on my mind. Not a day where I have not cried or felt scared.



And why has legal system treated me like this?

Simply because I am a rape victim.