

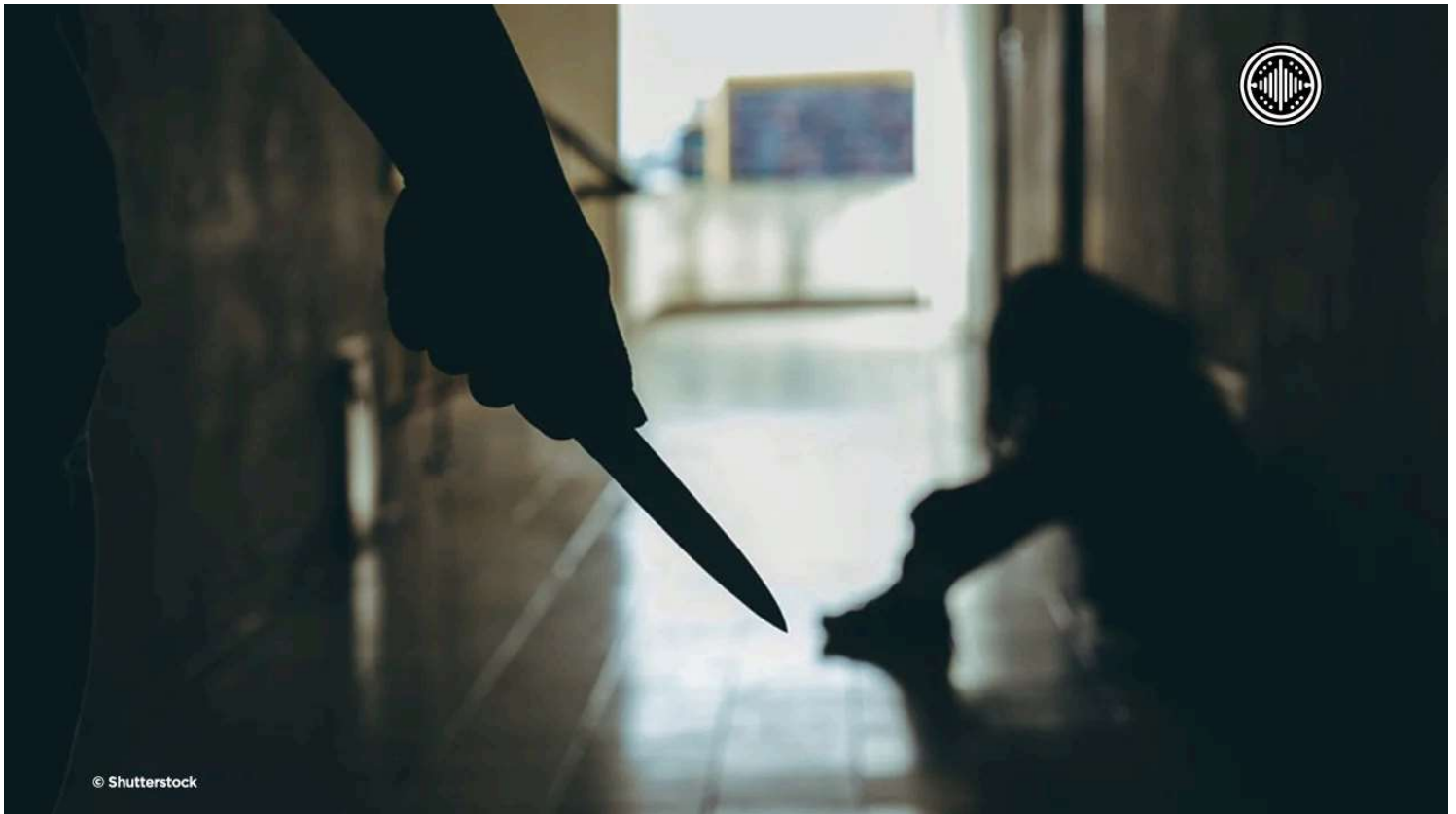
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Westhoughton Woman's Knife Threat Lie to Frame Ex Exposed by Video Evidence

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— Categories: Crime



A woman from Westhoughton has narrowly avoided prison after falsely claiming her ex-partner turned up at her home armed with a knife and threatened to kill her. The claims led to the innocent man being arrested, though later cleared thanks to video evidence recorded by his mother.

Jessica Nichols, aged 34, was admitted to perverting the course of justice after making three separate emergency calls on September 17, 2017. In each, she escalated her

allegations against her ex-partner, initially saying he was banging on her door, later claiming he threatened to kill her, and finally stating he was armed with a knife. All of it was untrue.

Nichols appeared before Bolton Crown Court on July 24, where Judge Jon Close highlighted the “extraordinarily long delay” in bringing charges. He noted that it took five years for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to prosecute the case. He stressed that the delay was “no fault of her own, nor of the victim.”

Prosecutor Neil Ronan told the court that Nichols first contacted police in the morning, claiming her former partner was causing a disturbance outside her home. Ten minutes later, she phoned again to allege that he was threatening to kill her. A third call, made around half an hour after the first, accused him of carrying a knife.

Responding officers arrested the man based on Nichols’ repeated claims. She later confirmed her story in an official police statement and was allowed to review it for errors, but made no corrections.

However, unbeknownst to her, the man had anticipated a possible false accusation. Mr Ronan explained that the ex-partner had brought his mother along for the visit “to disprove any allegation made that day.” She remained in the vehicle and recorded a video of him knocking on the door. “The video footage supports his account and undermines that of the defendant,” Mr Ronan told the court.

Nichols, who resides on Hydrangea Close, had a previous warning on record, which was also related to the same victim. She pleaded guilty on the first day of her trial.

Defending her, Amanda Johnson emphasised that Nichols had not reoffended since the incident. She said: “The defendant works full time and is responsible for keeping a roof over the heads of her children and paying the household bills. To the defendant’s credit, the girls are doing well.”

Judge Close was firm in condemning her actions, stating: “(The victim) could very easily have found himself facing a two-and-a-half-year sentence for something he didn’t do. Yours becomes the tale of the person who cried wolf. That becomes the tale everybody tells. Victims risk being disbelieved, and justice risks not being done. The risk it poses is genuine, that abusers do not get punishment. Victims disbelieved that is the real wickedness of that which you have done.”

Although the judge noted that this type of offence often leads to immediate imprisonment, he considered the passage of time and the potential impact on Nichols' children before passing sentence. She was handed a 12-month custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, along with 100 hours of unpaid community work.