

The false rape accusation model vs. Cathleen Crowell's allegation

This chart, reprinted from the June 1985 issue of Chicago Lawyer, compares the Air Force model of a false rape allegation with relevant points of the story that Cathleen Crowell told in 1977 and 1979 when she accused Gary Dotson of raping her. The model was developed by Charles P. McDowell, based on a study of 1,218 reported rapes on Air Force locations throughout the world during 1980-84. Of the reports, 460 were proven legitimate and 212 false. The remaining 546 were unresolved.

McDowell=s model	Crowell=s story
Physical injuries of false accusers usually are limited to superficial cuts, scratches, and abrasions. Scratches often appear in a hatching or crosshatching pattern, due to repeated attempts to make the scratches visible. Scratches that resemble letters or words sometimes are found on false accusers, typically on their abdomens, but are not found on actual victims.	The physical injuries found on Crowell=s body the night of July 9, 1977, were entirely superficial. They consisted primarily of scratches on her abdomen, some of which appeared to form words or letters. Assistant State=s Attorney Raymond Garza, in his closing argument to the jury at Dotson=s 1979 trial, contended that the scratches spelled ALove@ and AHate.@
False accusers frequently claim that they offered vigorous and continuing physical resistance but suffered no serious reprisals. Most actual rape victims do not offer vigorous resistance, and those who do often suffer extremely brutal reprisals.	Crowell testified at Dotson=s 1979 trial that she scratched her rapist=s chest and ear with her fingernails. AI tried to fight him off,@ she said, Aand I couldn=t.@ When asked on cross examination what her attacker=s response was, she said, AHe just grabbed my hand.@
A false accusation typically solves some perceived problem for the Avictim.@ It may explain a pregnancy or venereal disease, or it may exact revenge. In contrast, actual rapes seldom appear to solve a problem. They usually create serious problems.	Crowell testified on April 4, 1985, that she invented the story that she had been raped because she feared that she was pregnant as a result of a consensual sexual encounter. She said she feared that if she was pregnant her guardians might kick her out of the house.
False accusers usually do not make their allegations initially to authorities. Typically they make them to friends or relatives who in turn inform the authorities.	Crowell testified on April 11, 1985, that she originally intended to tell her false story only to her foster parents, but told it to police when they happened upon her.
False victims, more often than actual ones, claim to have been raped by strangers.	Crowell contended both in 1977 and 1979 that she had been raped by a stranger.
False accusers, much more often that actual	Crowell said her abductors were drinking

ones, claim to have been attacked by multiple assailants who fit an unsavory stereotype.	alcohol and snorting drugs, and her Aburned out@ rapist had long, greasy, stringy hair.
False accusers typically claim to have been victims of simple penile insertions, or blitz rapes, without collateral sexual activity.	Crowell claimed to have been the victim only of a penile insertion without any collateral sexual activity.
False accusers tend to be vague on the details, but when a false victim does provide details she tends to do so with a relish that actual victims seldom have.	Crowell testified that she was abducted and held for two hours, but she was not asked to account for what happened during the period other than the rape itself.
False accusers, far more frequently than actual victims, cannot say exactly where the rape occurred.	Crowell claimed that the rape occurred in a moving car and that her view of the outside was restricted throughout the incident.
In false accusation cases, far more frequently than in actual cases, the purported crime scene and the physical evidence are found to be inconsistent with the allegation.	There were a number of inconsistencies between Crowell=s story and the physical evidence. For instance, how did the dirt get on her clothing if she was raped in a car?
False accusers, more often than actual victims, claim to have received phone calls from their Arapists@ before or after the crime.	Crowell did not claim to have received calls, but did claim that one of her abductors came into the restaurant where she worked.
False accusers, more often than actual victims, have personal problems, including difficulty in interpersonal relationships and a history of lying and exaggeration.	Crowell=s foster mother, Carol Smith, said in 1985 that Crowell had a history of lying. Crowell discussed interpersonal problems in an April 29, 1985, <i>People</i> magazine article.