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John Edison, Jr: Victim of lies, perjury, and corruption

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For nearly half a year the state of Maryland condemned 16-year-old [John Edison Jr.](#) to a government cage without bond as he faced charges of violently raping a 12-year-old girl on July 5, 2008. After being smeared as a rapist in the media, extricated from friends and family, and forced to miss more than three months of school, Edison faced 51 years in a penitentiary for a crime he not only didn't commit, but one that police and prosecutors almost certainly *knew he couldn't possibly have committed* but pursued anyway.

John Edison was [acquitted](#) of these horrendous charges last Friday, Dec. 19, after it took a jury *less than one hour* to find him innocent. As Frostburg University economics professor Bill Anderson [noted](#) after the trial, "The time of deliberation tells me that jurors had decided on acquittal even before Edison's attorney presented the defense."

This is meant to take nothing away from attorney Kevin J. McDevitt, of course; his heroic and vigorous defense of Edison is *precisely* what allowed jurors and other observers to realize the state's allegations against his client were entirely bogus in the first place. McDevitt's inspection of police reports and interrogation tapes, along with interviews with police officers involved with his client's arrest, revealed that Edison was essentially being framed by St. Mary's County Det. Bill Raddatz and Maryland State Police Det. Nims.

As a result of interviews with Edison's family, I've learned that Det. Raddatz lied from day one about observing scratch marks on John Edison. In fact, Raddatz wrote in a statement of charges that Edison had scratches on *both* of his arms, even though Edison told Raddatz that the only mark on his body was an abrasion put on one of his arms while he was being frisked in the police station by Maryland State Police Tpr. Roby -- who himself testified that he didn't remember seeing a single mark on Edison's body at the time of his arrest. Not only is such an abrasion inconsistent with defensive wounds from a violent rape, but Raddatz never even bothered to contact Roby about this claim.

Moreover, Det. Raddatz intentionally photographed marks on Edison's body *that he knew weren't scratches*, something he later admitted. Indeed, during the course of his investigation, McDevitt learned that three police officers saw Edison without a shirt on the morning of his arrest, and all of them said they didn't see scratches on Edison's body.

As if this complete fabrication of evidence weren't bad enough, Det. Raddatz also lied, at minimum, to fellow police officers and said that Edison *admitted* to raping the 12-year-old girl. According to a report from St. Mary's County Cpl. Stephen Myers, who is one of the officers who admitted to seeing no scratch marks on Edison, it was learned that the defendant confessed to sexual assault. However, there is *no such confession* present on interrogation tapes; all Edison admitted was that any sexual relations that transpired were consensual.

Enter Det. Nims, who showed up between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m. on the day of Edison's arrest and later committed perjury by *swearing in a search warrant* that John Edison had scratches on his chest. (So Raddatz insists there are scratch marks on Edison's arms; Nims says he saw scratches on Edison's chest. That's a lot of scratches on someone whose accuser admits during trial that she *never once scratched Edison.*)

Det. Nims also swore in a search warrant that he took DNA evidence from Edison but later admitted under oath that although he swore to collecting it, Det. Raddatz actually collected this evidence. This malfeasance shouldn't be too hard to believe considering the fact that Nims also perjured himself on the witness stand during Edison's trial when he [lied about disclosing a mistake](#) he made in one of his reports. Specifically, Nims

testified that he disclosed during an earlier motions hearing that he mistakenly documented that the accuser reported bleeding from her vagina after she was allegedly raped. However, this claim was proven false by transcripts obtained from the prior hearing, during which Det. Nims made no such disclosure.

In no uncertain terms, John Edison has from the very first day of his arrest been the victim of blatant, unconscionable lies by the lead detectives in this non-rape case. Instead of conducting themselves as officers of the law and administering an unbiased investigation to determine whether or not laws were broken, Dets. Raddatz and Nims colluded to fabricate evidence against an innocent boy.

Equally contemptible in this matter is Assistant State's Attorney Joe Stalanis, who pursued this case against Edison despite the ridiculous idea that someone could have actually committed a violent rape that resulted in *absolutely no injuries to a single person involved*.

In fact, at one point the 15-year-old friend of the accuser told Det. Nims that John Edison and his friend snatched the two girls off the street, dragged them into Edison's house, and raped them -- a statement Stalanis attempted to exclude from evidence. In a separate report, this same girl contended to Tpr. Roby that Edison raped the 12-year-old while she tried to stop it, but Edison's friend grabbed her and raped *her*. And in yet *another* report, the girl tells police the four children were all hanging out together.

To believe that police and prosecutors thought John Edison (or his friend, who was arrested originally as well) actually committed a violent rape requires a suspension of disbelief suitable only for the most fantastic of science fiction movies. It is only due to the indefatigable work of Kevin McDevitt, one family's faith in a boy it knew to be innocent, and a jury comprising sensible folks that justice prevailed against the steepest of odds.

Given that the state reserves a monopoly on the use of force, one is hard-pressed to believe when dealing with its agents that honesty and integrity are even plausible, much less guaranteed.

Despite the moral depravity on display in this case, there were actually some good guys at work. In particular, the officers who admitted to seeing no scratches on John Edison at the time of his arrest deserve to be commended. However, Dets. Raddatz and Nims should be fired immediately. ASA Stalanis deserves to be disbarred. State's Attorney Richard Fritz hardly escapes scrutiny, as he was aware of this case from the outset and used his influence with local judges to have Edison tried as an adult.

Just about everything about this case reeks of corruption, and all of these men should be charged with obstruction of justice for their abhorrent malfeasance and sabotage of an innocent citizen. The notion that such behavior would be tolerated in a country ostensibly founded on principles of individual liberty is absurd on its face.

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