Opinion

FACEBOOK
If He Can Go Down, So Can You

OP-6472I

1 Let me be clear up front: I'm not defending Russell Brand. The judge called him a sexual predator, and on the stand, Brand admitted he had used his fame to gain sexual access to women.
But his case raises a question that should worry anyone who could ever be accused of anything. The woman in this clip from the SANITY podcast put it plainly: "*Testimony is evidence, but if it's the only evidence, which it was, then I'm not sure how you can come to the conclusion that he's guilty of r*pe and sexual assault beyond a reasonable doubt*."

2 Six women accused Brand of offenses between 1999 and 2009. On November 5, a London jury convicted him of one count of r*pe and three of sexual assault and acquitted him on three other counts. On November 9, he was sentenced to 10 and a half years.
There was no forensic evidence, decades on. The case leaned on the women's accounts, a former friend's recollection of a 1999 trip, a 1999 hotel-room photo that placed Brand in the room but not the act and a text apology one woman recalled in her police interviews, whose meaning was disputed.

3 Now strip away the fame, because **any one of us could be Russell Brand**.
Someone you dated, worked with or met once at a party in 2003 can walk into a police station tomorrow. After twenty years there's no forensic trail, no texts on a phone you threw out a decade ago, and no witness who remembers an ordinary night. You'll have exactly one defence: "I didn't do it." And a jury is free to decide that isn't enough.

That's not a loophole. It's the law. Britain stopped requiring judges to warn juries about convicting on a complainant's uncorroborated word in sexual cases in 1994. Convicting someone with nothing to back up the accusation should be rare.

4 Instead, **it's an indictment of a justice system** that lets a sincere-sounding story stand in for proof.
Britain has already seen where that leads. In Operation Midland, police publicly called Carl Beech's accusations of a VIP abuse ring "credible and true" and raided the homes of innocent men, including a former home secretary and a D-Day veteran. Beech had made it all up. In 2019, he was sentenced to 18 years.

5 Now compare how British courts handled fresh cases.
Hadush Kebatu, an Ethiopian asylum seeker, sexually assaulted a 14-year-old girl and a woman in Epping just days after arriving on a small boat. Convicted on five charges, **he got 12 months**. Then the prison service released him by mistake, before he was rearrested and deported.

Qais Al-Aswad, a Syrian asylum seeker who arrived in 2024, was convicted of sexually assaulting three women in Horley. His sentence: six months, suspended, plus unpaid work. No prison.

6 Yes, r*pe carries a far heavier sentence than sexual assault, so these aren't identical. But the pattern is hard to miss: **the system threw the book at the old**, **thin case and went easy on the fresh**, **proven ones**.
Today it's Brand. **Tomorrow it's anyone with an accuser**.

By: MA Rothman Contact CONNECT: HERE
Sourced for CONNECT