# Ellie Wilson’s fight exposes failings in justice system for rape survivors



In a revealing new documentary, rape survivor Ellie Wilson shares the harrowing details of her experience within the criminal justice system, a journey marked by trauma and resilience. The documentary, titled *Convicting My Ex*, follows Wilson over nine months, documenting her battle for justice after her ex-boyfriend, Daniel McFarlane, was convicted in 2022 of two rapes that occurred during their relationship. Although she secured a conviction and a five-year prison sentence for McFarlane, the trial exposed the significant psychological toll on Wilson, as she was subjected to intense scrutiny and appropriation of her narrative within the courtroom.

The experience in court was described by Wilson as ‘bruising,’ particularly due to the conduct of McFarlane’s defence lawyer, Lorenzo Alonzi, whose tactics included questioning her character in ways that left her feeling ‘humiliated.’ The Faculty of Advocates later found Alonzi guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct over six of the eleven issues Wilson raised in her complaint against him. This outcome signifies a critical step toward holding legal representatives accountable for their behaviour and ensuring that victims are not further traumatized during court proceedings.

Despite the recorded confession from McFarlane, which should have served as compelling evidence, the trial was arduous, with the jury's verdict not unanimous—a reflection of the challenges survivors often face even when presented with substantial proof. Speaking about the trial, Wilson expressed that the process was not just about seeking justice for herself, but also about addressing the systemic failures within the legal framework that often places undue burdens on victims. “I want to use my voice for change,” she stated, highlighting her motivation to advocate for greater support mechanisms in the justice system.

Wilson's ordeal did not end with the conviction. She has faced ongoing emotional distress, intensified by revelations that McFarlane was considered for parole—a decision that propelled her to action as she campaigned publicly for improvements in how victims are treated. The fear of McFarlane's release deeply affected her mental well-being, prompting sleepless nights and feelings of exile from a sense of normalcy.

In her documentary, Wilson collaborates with fellow survivors to shed light on the complexities of domestic abuse and sexual violence, challenging the narrow stereotypes that often define who a ‘victim’ is. “This documentary exposes the complexity of domestic abuse and sexual violence in young relationships,” she explained, aiming to reshape public perceptions surrounding these issues. The emphasis on nuanced narratives is critical, particularly in light of statistics revealing that many victims remain silent due to fear of disbelief or further victimization.

Wilson's advocacy extends beyond personal testimonies; it encompasses systematic changes, particularly in educational institutions. She has called for universities to reassess their protocols regarding alleged sex offenders on campus, especially after McFarlane was admitted to Edinburgh University despite his conviction. This situation underscores the urgent need for academic institutions to prioritise student safety and transparently handle such cases to ensure that survivors feel protected.

Moreover, the issue of victim participation in parole hearings has come to the forefront following Wilson's experiences. Reports indicate that victims have been barred from attending these hearings under various pretenses, ostensibly to prevent distress to the perpetrator. Such policies highlight an ongoing need for reform within the legal structure to ensure that the rights and mental health of victims are prioritised over the perceived interests of offenders.

As Wilson continues to share her story, she becomes a beacon of hope for others who have endured similar struggles. Her journey illustrates not only the resilience of individuals confronting trauma but also the critical need for ongoing dialogue surrounding victims' rights in the criminal justice system. With her documentary, Wilson hopes to inspire systemic changes that not only support victims but also challenge ingrained societal attitudes toward sexual violence.

*Convicting My Ex* is set to air on BBC Three, offering viewers an unfiltered glimpse into the complexity of Wilson's experience and the broader implications for victims across the country.

**Reference Map**1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2. Paragraphs 1, 2, 5
3. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
4. Paragraphs 4, 5
5. Paragraphs 2, 3
6. Paragraph 5
7. Paragraphs 2, 3

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14700861/I-humiliated-traumatic-court-ordeal-rape-survivor-Ellie-tells-new-documentary.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64248542> - Ellie Wilson, a former politics student, secretly recorded her rapist, Daniel McFarlane, admitting to his crimes. McFarlane was found guilty of two rape charges and sentenced to five years in prison. Despite the audio confession, the jury's verdict was not unanimous, highlighting challenges in securing convictions even with substantial evidence. Wilson has since waived her anonymity and is campaigning for victims' rights, emphasizing the manipulative nature of abusers and the need for systemic change in handling such cases.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/20/the-survivor-who-spoke-out-ellie-wilson-on-the-brutal-reality-of-taking-an-attacker-to-court> - Ellie Wilson, a rape survivor, shares her harrowing experience of taking her attacker, Daniel McFarlane, to court. Despite a recorded confession, the trial was grueling, with the defense questioning her character and behavior. McFarlane was convicted, but the process was deeply traumatic for Wilson. She now campaigns for policy changes, better support for victims, and greater transparency in the justice system, aiming to help others navigate similar challenges and to challenge stereotypes about victims.
4. <https://news.stv.tv/east-central/ellie-wilson-rape-survivor-who-secretly-recorded-confession-calls-for-university-changes> - Ellie Wilson, a rape survivor who secretly recorded her attacker's confession, is advocating for universities to reassess how they handle suspected sex offenders. Despite McFarlane's conviction, he was admitted to Edinburgh University, raising concerns about the safety of other students. Wilson emphasizes the need for universities to prioritize student safety and transparency, expressing disappointment in Edinburgh University's handling of the case and calling for systemic changes to prevent similar incidents.
5. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/rapists-lawyer-who-traumatised-survivor-32562646> - Ellie Wilson's complaint against her rapist's defense lawyer, Lorenzo Alonzi, was upheld by the Faculty of Advocates' complaints committee. The committee found that Alonzi's behavior amounted to unsatisfactory professional conduct on six of the eleven issues raised. Wilson had alleged that Alonzi subjected her to personal attacks during cross-examination, leaving her feeling humiliated and blamed for the assault. The outcome sets a precedent that advocates cannot act without consequences, aiming to protect victims from further trauma during legal proceedings.
6. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/brave-rape-survivor-who-snared-29817870> - Ellie Wilson expressed relief after her rapist, Daniel McFarlane, was denied permission to appeal his conviction and sentence. McFarlane had been convicted of two rapes and sentenced to five years in prison. Despite previous unsuccessful appeals, he attempted to challenge the conviction again, which was also refused. Wilson, who waived her anonymity, described the process as 'relentlessly tormenting' and emphasized the emotional toll of ongoing legal battles for victims seeking justice.
7. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/rape-survivor-retraumatised-lawyer-court-30070308> - Ellie Wilson, a rape survivor, welcomed moves to make it easier for victims to obtain court transcripts after claiming she was retraumatized by her rapist's lawyer during the trial. Wilson had secretly recorded her attacker's confession, which was used as evidence in court. Following the trial, she lodged a formal complaint against the defense lawyer, Lorenzo Alonzi, with the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission. The case highlights the need for greater transparency and support for victims in the legal process.