U.K. Man Gets Life in Prison for Deliberately Spreading HIV

He reportedly lied about his status and ripped his condoms to fool men he met on Grindr. Later, he would taunt them via texts.

April 18, 2018 By Trent Straube

A hairdresser from Brighton, England, is the first person in that country to be found guilty of intentionally infecting others with HIV, reports The Guardian.

Daryll Rowe, 27, has been sentenced to life in prison for transmitting HIV to five men (referred to as causing grievous bodily harm with intent) and for attempting to infect five others.

Rowe was diagnosed with HIV in April 2015 but ignored the advice of doctors and refused treatment. He then began meeting men on the gay hookup app Grindr so that he could infect them, according to information from the trial and reported by the newspaper. He would lie about his status and try to pressure them into having condomless sex; other times, he tricked the men by wearing a condom that he had intentionally ripped. Afterward, he would taunt the men via text.

BBC.com interviewed one of the men who contracted HIV from Rowe. “The reason I had a real hard time dealing with [the diagnosis],” said the man, who remains anonymous, “is that both of my biological parents died of AIDS. That was one of the reasons I was always so careful.”

He said that a few weeks after the sexual encounter, during which they used a condom, he became sick and eventually got tested for HIV. He told a health adviser that after sex, Rowe had told him he ripped the condom. “And it was just the laughter. There was this menace in his voice that he was happy at what he did.”

The health adviser told him they had seen four other similar cases.

At the sentencing, Judge Christine Henson said to Rowe: “You are the first individual to be sentenced for Section 18 offences in the context of infecting others with HIV,” reports The Guardian. “With the full knowledge of the risk you posed to others and the legal implications of engaging in risky sexual practices, you embarked on a deliberate campaign to infect other men with the HIV virus.

“Given the facts of this case and your permissive predatory behavior I cannot see when you would

no longer be a danger to gay men.”

It’s important to note that HIV-positive people who maintain an undetectable viral load have “effectively no risk” of transmitting HIV sexually, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is commonly referred to as “treatment as prevention,” or TasP, and is the basis for the “Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (U=U)” campaign. For related articles in POZ, click #TasP and #Undetectable.

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