

OTTAWA - Community organizations from across the city and Canada are outraged, questioning the legitimacy of a recent sexual assault ruling and calling for an appeal. The *Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC)*, *Ottawa Victim Services (OVS)* and the *Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)* believe there was a significant error of law in the case of Edward 'Eddie' Ekiyor, who was acquitted on October 1, 2021, of overcoming resistance to commit an offence, kidnapping, and sexual assault.

Aline Vlasceanu, Executive Director of CRCVC said: *"The verdict from Justice Trevor Brown on October 1st, 2021, was shocking, and is just the latest example of why survivors have little to no faith in the 'justice' system."* She went on to say: *"Justices have a great responsibility when delivering these rulings. It is not only the survivor in this case who is listening, it is all survivors who are considering reporting their assault to the police."*

Despite finding the survivor was drugged with GHB - a date rape drug - Justice Brown found there was consent. If this ruling is not appealed, then how and why would any survivor come forward in cases of drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA)? An accused's defence will always be: "she said yes, she just can't remember".

A person must have the capacity to provide consent. In this case, the complainant did not have an operating mind capable of consenting due to falling in and out of consciousness. Justice Trevor Brown said he believed the victim was administered a date rape drug at the bar, yet the principal issue in the case was whether the victim, impaired by the drug, consented to sexual activity with Ekiyor.

In his ruling, the judge used thinly veiled rape myths, saying "it is a dangerous and utterly demoralizing reality that men use these drugs to target and victimize vulnerable young women. People need to exercise extreme care when out drinking in public...Men and women need to look out for one another in such situations."

**Only one party is responsible for sexual assault: the perpetrator. When Brown states "take extreme care", it places the responsibility on the victim not to be sexually assaulted.** This victim-blaming is unfair and dangerous. It can cause survivors to question whether violence is their fault and makes them less likely to get support, let alone report violence to the police.

Heidi Illingworth, the Executive Director of Ottawa Victim Services (OVS), stated: *"We believe the judge incorrectly applied the law and we demand the Crown appeal this judgment. It is a dangerous precedent for DFSA cases and will be another barrier for survivors in coming forward. It is already incredibly difficult for women to get justice and this will make it more so."*

We have written a call to action for Ottawa's Head Crown Attorney, Brian Holowka, as well as his Deputy Crown Attorneys, and Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario to demand that this case be appealed. To support this call to action, follow this link and fill in your details. An automatic email will be sent to their offices.

The link is below:

<https://act.newmode.net/action/ottawa-coalition-end-violence-against-women-octevaw/appeal-justice-sexual-assault-survivor>

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