

WHY DO THEY DO IT?

BRIAN BANKS AND WANETTA GIBSON



In the summer of 2002, Brian Banks was a senior at Long Beach Poly High; Wanetta Gibson was a sophomore. Brian Banks, a top college football prospect, was being heavily recruited by the University of South Carolina, University of California, Los Angeles, and other high-profile college football programs. While attending summer school, Banks left his classroom to make a phone call. He ran into Gibson. Banks stated that “they fooled around,” but it was consensual. Subsequently, Gibson charged that Banks sexually assaulted her.

Rather than facing the possibility of a 41-years-to-life prison sentence, Banks pled no contest to one count of forcible rape. He spent five years in prison. Upon his release, he was required to register as a sex offender and wear an electronic monitoring bracelet. During this time, Gibson and her family sued the Long Beach schools. They settled the case for \$1.5 million.

Around 2011, Gibson reached out to Banks on Facebook. Banks responded by asking if Gibson would meet with him and a private investigator. She agreed to the meeting. During the meeting, Gibson was secretly recorded, stating that she had lied and she was not raped. This triggered a



An emotional Brian Banks upon hearing that his conviction was dismissed.

series of events. In May 2012, Brian Banks’s conviction was dismissed.⁴⁸ Wanetta Gibson has been ordered to pay the \$1.5 million plus an additional \$1.1 million in fees. In January 2015, Brian Banks was working for the National Football League in New York City.

THINK ABOUT IT

In this example, the question “Why do they do it?” refers to those people who may have initially labeled Brian Banks.

1. What did Brian Banks experience being labeled a convicted sex offender? Subsequently, what may some now label Wanetta Gibson?
2. Did age, gender, and race play a part in establishing patterns of differential criminal justice decision-making?