

# New York Couple Extradited to Utah to Face Felony Sex Crime Charges Stemming from Sundance Film Festival Incident

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On September 21, a New York City duo was extradited to Utah to confront felony criminal charges including object rape, forcible sodomy, and other sex crimes stemming from an alleged event that prosecutors say occurred at the time of the Sundance Film Festival in Park City in January. The couple was not detained at Sundance as no charges were filed until this September, more than half a calendar year after the film festival and alleged criminal offense took place.

The Sundance Film Festival is a major event that attracts tens of thousands of guests to Utah each year. While most festival-goers leave with fond memories, attendants are periodically detained and charged with unlawful acts such as drug possession, public intoxication, and disorderly conduct.

Earlier this September, a New York City couple was charged with several sex offenses stemming from a crime that allegedly took place at Sundance 2016. Both Michael Taylor, 45, and Anne Hardcastle, 27, were extradited from New York City to Utah, where the crimes purportedly happened. The allegations against Taylor and Hardcastle include forcible sexual abuse and object rape, while Hardcastle is also getting charged with forcible sodomy.

Prosecutors assert that Hardcastle and Taylor forced a woman festival guest into a non-consensual “threesome,” during which the victim was allegedly given ecstasy and alcohol before losing consciousness, later awakening to find her body marked with “scratches on her chest, suction marks on her neck, fresh bruises on her upper left arm, a bite mark on her left forearm and several scratches on her back and stomach,” according to prosecutors. “She complained of acute vaginal pain.”

The claim came to the attention of criminal investigators after Hardcastle interacted with the victim through Instagram several hours after the alleged offense took place. Hardcastle reportedly stated, “You said you liked it

rough and so I gave you what you wanted,” which led detectives to initiate an investigation, during which the couple’s accuser was instructed to maintain communication with Hardcastle so as to acquire more evidence.

The investigation culminated in the couple’s arrest at their apartment in Manhattan’s SoHo neighborhood on September 9. The arrest was conducted by the New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force, a federal agency whose role is to apprehend fugitives.

Following the apprehension, Hardcastle and Taylor were extradited from Manhattan Criminal Court to be charged in Summit County District Court. Anne Hardcastle, 27, and Michael Taylor, 45, appeared in a Park City courthouse September 26th, and entered their not guilty pleas after being released on \$20,000 cash bail. The well-heeled world travelers were ordered to surrender their passports by Oct. 5 or have the bail forfeited, one court source said. Taylor was given a preliminary hearing date of Nov. 18 while Hardcastle was told to return Dec. 12. Those dates could change

## **Utah Penalties for Forcible Sodomy, Sexual Abuse, and Object Rape**

Forcible sodomy, forcible sexual abuse, and object rape are all felony charges under the corresponding statutes in Utah’s criminal code. Felonies are the most serious types of crimes, such as aggravated assault and manslaughter, and can therefore lead to several years behind bars. This is especially true of first degree felonies, which are Utah’s most serious class of non-capital felony. Felony offenses in Utah may also be classified as second degree or third degree felonies.

The charges against Taylor and Hardcastle– and the punishments for offenders who are charged with these crimes– are summarized below.

- **Forcible Sexual Abuse**
  - Statute – Utah Code § 76-5-404
  - Classification – Second degree felony, first degree felony
  - Description – Non-consensual contact with the breasts, anus, buttocks, or genitals of another person for the purpose of inflicting pain or distress, or to gratify a sexual desire, where the victim is at least 14 years old.
  - Sentence – 1 to 15 years, 6 years to life, 10 years to life, 15 years to life
  - Fine – Up to \$10,000
  
- **Forcible Sodomy**
  - Statute – Utah Code § 76-5-403
  - Classification – First degree felony
  - Description – Non-consensual contact between one person’s mouth or anus and another person’s genitals, where the victim is at least 14 years old.
  - Sentence – 5 years to life, 6 years to life, 10 years to life, 15 years to life
  - Fine – Up to \$10,000

- [Object Rape](#)

- Statute – Utah Code § 76-5-402.2
- Classification – First degree felony
- Description – Non-consensual penetration of an orifice using a foreign object, where the victim is at least 14 years old.
- Sentence – 5 years to life, 6 years to life, 10 years to life, 15 years to life
- Fine – Up to \$10,000

### **Contact a Criminal Defense attorney if You Were Charged with a Sex Crime**

If you or one of your family members was recently arrested in Utah, or has been implicated of committing a sex crime, it remains in your best interests to promptly contact a well-informed sex crimes lawyer. Wasatch Defense Attorneys have worked on numerous felony and misdemeanor cases, and represents defendants throughout the state of Utah. To set up a free legal consultation with Wasatch Defense Attorneys, please call [801-980-9965](tel:801-980-9965).

### **Comments**

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