

reprinted from The Cord Weekly

FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Excerpts from Pamphlets

"We go through life assuming we are secure. All of a sudden, something happens that makes us aware we are totally vulnerable."

For as long as you can remember you have probably been led to believe that sexual assault is deadly and brutal. You have learned to fear it, fear reporting it and fear the judicial system.

It is important to note that the offender can be male or female, but for the purpose of the following information, they will be referred to as 'he'.

Sexual Assault prevention is a state of mind. It is a daily exercise that says, "I refuse to be a victim."

Common Misconceptions of Sexual Assault:

★ All women want to be sexually assaulted...

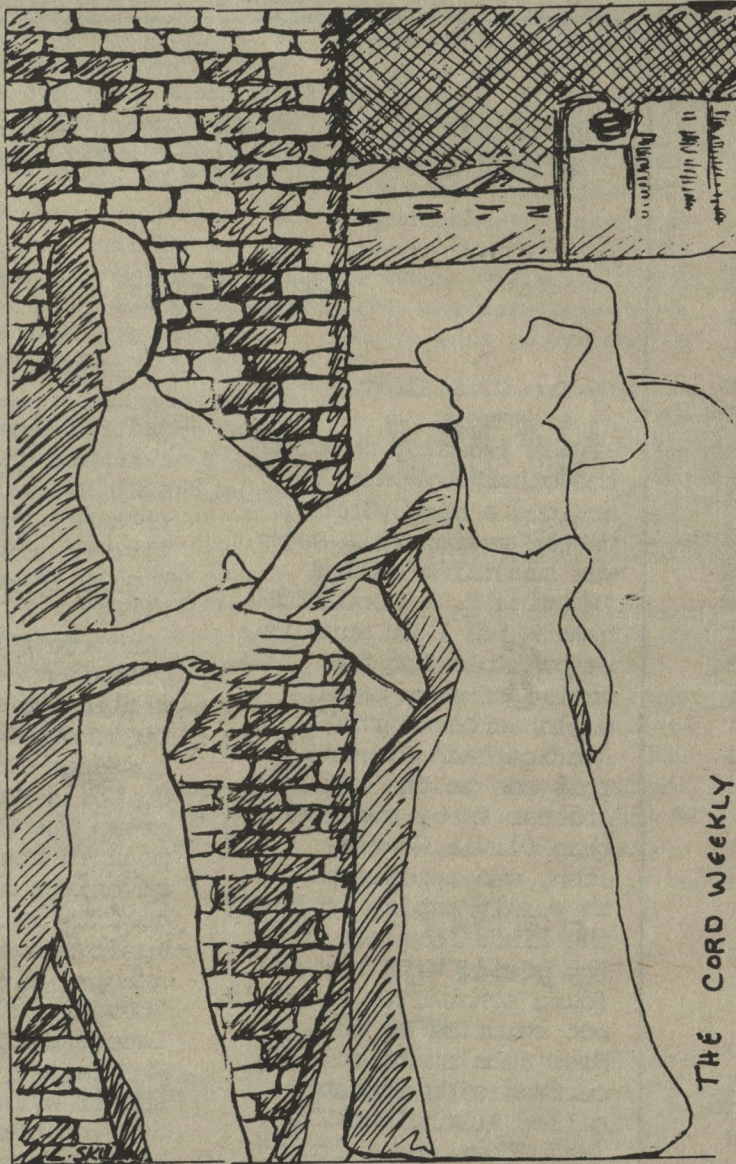
Sexual Assault is, by definition, an act committed against the will of the victim. It is not seduction. There is not tenderness in sexual assault, no concern for the feelings of the victim. The thought that a woman could enjoy being exposed to the threat of injury or death, that she could enjoy the humiliation and fear that accompanies sexual assault, is preposterous.

★ No woman can be sexually assaulted against her will...

Because of a lack of understanding of how and why this act occurs, many believe that a normal healthy woman simply cannot be sexually assaulted. Often the most ardent believers of this myth are women themselves, and their judgmental attitudes continue to victimize every woman who is sexually assaulted.

★ She was asking for it...

The popular belief that women, because of their behaviour or dress, somehow cause a man to commit sexual assault, disguises who is actually responsible for this act. The burden of blame is wrongfully shifted from the offender to his victim.



Sexual Assault (previously referred to as rape) is not something we like to think about.

★ If you are going to be sexually assaulted, you may as well relax and enjoy it...

This attitude suggests that if a woman is attacked and attempts to defend herself, she can never succeed; that all women are weak and defenseless. Scores of women have successfully warded off their attackers. Women need to understand and believe they can indeed do something about sexual assault.

★ "...BUT, He did not look like an attacker..."

In spite of what you may have been taught, you cannot recognize the offender by looking at him. He has no "look". He can be a repairman, deliveryman, salesman, a date, a casual acquaintance, someone related to you, a fellow student, an employer or the man next door. IN FACT, HE CAN BE ANYONE.

Since you cannot recognize him, it is important that you learn to recognize potentially dangerous situations and know how to protect yourself.

One in four Canadian women is sexually assaulted. Most women live with the fear of being sexually assaulted. People don't like to talk about it but as a community, we should all be concerned. No one should have to live in fear.

What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is any unwanted act of a sexual nature imposed by one person upon another.

Sexual assault of any kind is a crime, even in a marriage or a dating relationship.

Statistics show that nearly all sexual assaults are committed by men against women or girls. A very small percentage of sexual assault victims are men.

Is there a difference between Sexual Assault and Rape?

Rape is unwanted sexual intercourse.

Under the law, sexual assault is any unwanted act of a sexual nature, including rape and any other unwanted fondling or touching.

Where does it happen?

Most people believe that sexual assault happens in "dangerous" places such as dark alleys or parking lots. But more than half of all sexual assaults take place in private homes.

Who is Sexually Assaulted?

All kinds of women are sexually assaulted—women from every walk of life. They can be of every racial and ethnic background; rich or poor; homemakers or women who work outside the home.

Women of all ages and physical types are sexually assaulted, including elderly and disabled women.

It doesn't happen to any certain "type" of women. Any woman can be sexually assaulted.

Why does Sexual Assault happen?

A sexual assault happens when a man thinks that his feelings and desires are more important than the woman's feelings and desires. This attitude reflects the fact that women have not yet achieved real equality in our society.

By committing a sexual assault, the man imposes his wishes on the woman by pressure, force or other means. His "right" to get what he wants is more important to him than her right to say no.

When a woman says no, many men don't listen. Some men think she really means maybe or yes. Some men even believe that women secretly "want" or that they "deserve" to be raped. This is not true.

Under the law, women have the right to say no to any form of sex or sexual touching, even in a marriage or when dating. No means no—whatever the situation.

Who commits Sexual Assault?

Most people think of sexual assault as a woman being sexually attacked by a stranger. But more than half of all sexual assaults are committed by men who are known to the women.

When a woman knows the man who sexually assaults her, it is less likely that what has happened to her will be seen as a sexual assault, even by her. She is also less likely to be believed.

But these sexual assaults are no less a crime than those committed by strangers.

Men who commit sexual assault are from every background—rich and poor; of every racial and ethnic group; and are in every kind of job and profession.

Men who commit sexual assault can be the husbands, partners, relatives, boyfriends, employers, co-workers, doctors, teachers or lawyers of the women they assault.

Who is responsible for Sexual Assault?

People who commit sexual assaults are responsible for these crimes, not the victims.

What a woman wears, where she goes, what she drinks or who she talks to does not mean she is inviting sexual assault or giving up her right to no. These myths blame the victim for the crime, not the offender.

Any woman of any age in almost any situation can be sexually attacked. If a woman is sexually assaulted it is not her fault.

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