

Date Rape On Campus Happens Often

A 1985 survey showed that one in eight female university students will be date raped, and one in four will have a friend, lover or classmate attempt to rape them. Ninety per cent of victims don't report date rape. In this feature, Caroline Mallan of the Charlatan looks at the issue of date rape on campus.

by Caroline Mallan
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(Source: The Charlatan)

They were both drunk. That's probably why she invited him in after he walked her home from a party. "It could be dangerous for you to walk home this late all alone," he had insisted.

It was pouring rain so he asked to crash on her couch. She was too tired to try to get rid of him so she agreed. After all, he seemed like a nice enough guy. She went to bed and woke up with him beside her. He was all over her and she was barely awake. She said no. He entered her, then got up and went home.

For her it was a night she just wanted to forget. It wasn't until almost a year later - when they began talking about date rape at her campus - that she looked back at the night she had tried so hard to forget. She realized she had been sexually assaulted.

A lot of people think of a rapist as a deranged man who assaults women because of a tortured childhood or a chemical imbalance. He stalks his victims late at night, hides in closets, behind bushes and around corners. But Yvonne had let her attacker into her home. They had been drinking together and there was nothing about him to make her suspicious.

A 1985 Ms. Magazine survey showed that one in eight female university students will be date raped, and one in four will have a friend, lover or classmate attempt to rape them. Ninety per cent of victims don't report date rape.

Cindy Dougherty of Ottawa's Sexual Assault Support Centre said that often the victim rationalizes the assault in order to overcome feelings of guilt. She did go out with him, she wasn't really hurt, and she can just put it behind her and be more careful next time she lets an acquaintance into her home, the thinking goes.

The public, meantime, wonders why, if so many women are date raped, more victims don't go to the police.

"The conviction rate for rapists is less than one per cent, if it ever gets to trial," said Eva

Lazar of the Carleton University Women's Centre.

Dougherty said of the 1,200 women who sought help from her support centre in the past year, only six wanted to go to the hospital so that medical evidence for a police investigation could be collected.

"For most women it takes time to realize what has happened or to be able to come forward and get help," Dougherty said. "They aren't looking for justice, they are mostly looking for reassurances."

Yvonne did not go to the police. She chose to confide in a close friend. Eventually she visited a counsellor, who helped her deal with the feelings she was having towards men.

"It took a long time before I could trust anybody again," she said.

"If something like this happened again I think I would hesitate to go to the police. My parents would find out and I would be dragged through the mud."

The man who raped Yvonne was in his early twenties. She said she was not attracted to him at all, and looking back she is mad she wasn't more forceful with him. This, she said, would probably have put him off. He had made sexist comments over the course of the evening and he just wasn't her type. Yvonne was new in Ottawa and had made few friends. This, she said, made her vulnerable to him and he knew it.

"I believe that women today have to realize who is out there and what they are capable of. We have to take responsibility for our own bodies," she said.

"He knew I wouldn't scream, he counted on the fact that I wouldn't know what to do. He called me and asked me out a few days later."

Information from the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre indicates that most women who are sexually assaulted after a date are between the ages of 15 and 25.

A woman who has been raped has quick decisions to make. Dougherty said she can choose to call the police immediately. This means undergoing a medical examination, recounting what happened several times to the police and, if there is enough evidence, facing cross-examination

in a court of law.

This is the scenario that results in so few convictions in rape cases. Lazar said date rape boils down to one person's word against the other's.

Another option is going to a local rape crisis centre, where a volunteer will offer moral support and accompany the victim to the hospital and the police station, or help her seek legal advice.

Dougherty emphasizes that anyone who is raped has to talk about it before she can begin to recover. Victims of sexual assault have to know that there is someone who is willing to listen.

At the campus level Lazar said student residences are tailor-made for situations that can lead to date rape.

"The peer pressure in residence is overwhelming," she said.

First year students arrive on campus and are immediately exposed to all the freedoms that

go with being away from home, including sexual freedom, said Brenda Stewart, Carleton University's coordinator for residence life.

She said Carleton organizes education sessions, but attendance is not mandatory.

"I won't say that the education is sufficient, but we try to help students be at least aware," she said.

Most students assume that because they don't hear about on-campus or student-related rape they are somehow safe, that it isn't happening. Yvonne insists it is this false sense of security that leads to potentially dangerous situations such as her letting her date into her house. Statistics available through the support centre suggest that 78 per cent of all rapes occur where the victim lives.

Budget Hits Students Hard

UPEI students returned from the February reading back to campus justifiably nervous about Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson's recent budget freeze announcement on post-secondary and health spending and the impacts on their education. The Student Union responds with planned action against the cuts scheduled for March 9th on the theme, "If You Love Education." Activities include unveiling of Students' Rights declaration, a post card campaign, lunch-time Speaker Presentation, and a silent demonstration along the property lines of the University.

Student Union President, Lisa Murphy, expressed concern and anxiety over the announcements, worried that, unless corrective measures are taken, PEI students have a dismal ed-

ucational future in store for them. "These recent budget cutbacks add insult to injury to students", Murphy stated. "We are being slammed at every angle this year. The GST of % 7, the drastic reduction of student summer employment spending, the elimination of a national affordable transportation system, the reduction of loan and bursary monies going to needy PEI students, and the new % 3 administrative fee on Student debt balances add up to cripple chances of affording an education at all." The federal government's strategy to date does not reflect a commitment to the provision of a quality education that is accessible to qualified Canadians.

The scheduled "If You Love Education Day", on March 9th will focus on specific concerns resulting from under-funding in PEI.



Specials

5pm Till Close

Monday

Order a 6" pizza with 2 toppings and receive a free beverage

Tuesday

Order a large portion of wings and receive a free beverage

Wednesday

Try our new tacos or a large order of "Mama & Papa" Nachos and you guessed it; receive a free beverage

Mondays Tuesdays Wednesdays

11pm Till Close

\$1.99 + Tax

Special Prizes

Happy Hour

Mondays and Tuesdays

ALL Night!!

"Want a break from studying" or bring the books with you

Join us at
And Relax!!

