"I was raped": Problems in constructing and telling the believable account

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"I WAS RAPED": PROBLEMS IN CONSTRUCTING
AND TELLING THE BELIEVABLE ACCOUNT

By

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B.A., California State University Hayward, 1972

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

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"I Was Raped": Problems In Constructing And Telling The Believable Account

The topic of this study is the problem of formulating and telling a credible account of rape. Rape victims must decide what, when and to whom they are going to tell, if they tell at all. In deciding whether to tell, victims consider the believability of their stories. Victims also take others into account by considering how those persons will respond if and when they are told of the rape. The objective of this paper is to reach greater understanding of these rape victim problems through a description of the telling process as a social event.

Qualitative research procedures were followed throughout this study. An unstructured, casual conversation interview was used to obtain the data. Fifteen rape victims were interviewed about their rape experiences. To make discussion in this paper most relevant to the perspective of the rape victims, the story of telling has been presented to a large degree in the victim's own words.

The problem of formulating a credible account is crucially important because the believability comes to bear upon the personal and social identity that the victim's must live with the rest of their lives. A key issue here is the degree to which the victim feels personally responsible for the rape. Determination of responsibility results from the victim's comparison of her own rape experience with the rape myths of American society. The more the victim's account mirrors what others (and the victim) typically hold to be a "real" rape, the greater the probability the account will be accepted as credible and, therefore, the greater probability that the victim will tell.
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I have been assaulted
Met in the dark-
Frightened by a knife
Robbed of that which to others
I might want to give
And take

Poor creature, anonymous
Who struck a personal blow
Against all women,
Is there such an issue
Against giving and receiving love
That this was necessary?

Brenda J. Carroll
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rape is an atrocious crime, an act which violates a person's innermost physical and psychological being and can leave scars which may last a lifetime. Unlike victims of other crimes, the rape victim must prove she did not contribute to her assault. She is forced by society to pay for her victimization in humiliation and the loss of her self-image as a person. In court she has few of the legal protections accorded her assailant, although it is her credibility and reputation which are in effect on trial. Rape victims are considered guilty until proven innocent. Victims are denied their rights as humans by the attitudes of our society and institutions (Gager and Schurr, 1976:291).

The topic of this study is the problem of formulating and telling a credible account of rape. Rape victims must decide what, when and to whom they are going to tell, if they tell at all. In deciding whether to tell, victims consider the believability of their stories. Victims also take others into account by considering how those persons will respond if and when they are told of the rape. The objective of this paper is to reach greater understanding of these rape victim problems through a description of the telling process as a social event. The following ethnography describes factors bearing on the credibility and telling of rape experiences as perceived by the victim.

Rape is unlike other crimes. Being the victim of robbery, burglary or even murder, does not carry the same connotation as being a victim of rape. To have been raped is personally discrediting for the victim. She knows that she may not be believed if she decides to tell
about her rape experience. And she knows that knowledge of the rape may change her identity in the eyes of others. Therefore, deciding whether or not to tell is a very important consideration for the rape victim. If the victim does decide to tell, she wants to tell a story which is credible and which does not conflict with or damage her present identity. She wants to tell someone who will believe her.

The unique character of rape can be traced to a set of myths which are generally believed in American society. (See Chapter 3 for further discussion of rape myths.) Rape myths are learned by everyone, victimized and unvictimized alike. When a woman becomes a rape victim, she already possesses a set of cultural definitions about rape, rape victim and rapist. Most of these beliefs place the blame for the rape on the victim. The victim is seen as being responsible and accountable for the rape. She is defined as being a "bad girl". When a woman is raped, not only has a crime been committed against her person, but her self-definition is suddenly in jeopardy also. Since rape victims already know the cultural beliefs about rape, they also know the assumptions that other persons are liable to make about a rape victim. They know that others may question a victim's story, that others may wonder what "really" happened and what "kind" of a woman the victim really is. Any woman who thinks of herself as "nice" and "respectable" knows that telling of the rape may change this identity. She may become defined as a vindictive bitch, a stupid woman, or worse, a loose slut who asked for rape and got what she deserved. The single most important consideration in telling is: "Is my story believable, and can I tell it in such a way that it will not change my social identity?" Goffman (1963:133) sums up
this problem of maintaining one's identity\textsuperscript{1} by saying: "The painfulness, then, of sudden stigmatization can come not from the individual's confusion about his identity, but from his knowing too well what he has become."

This report begins with a discussion of the specifics of the actual rape events as told by the victims. Chapter 2 outlines the kinds of rape situations the sample victims dealt with. It also points out the features of the rapes which the victims considered to be important to credibility. Chapter 3, "Damaged Goods", explains the rape myths of American culture and how those were taken into account by the victim. This is an exploration of how the victims reassessed themselves after rape had become a facet of their backgrounds. The fourth chapter describes the process of deciding to tell and Chapter 5 describes what actually happened when the victims did tell. The summary chapter draws conclusions about the problem of formulating a credible account and telling it. The appendices which follow provide: (1) an account by the researcher of "doing this study", (2) summary tables providing specific information about the victims and their rape experiences, and (3) selected interview transcripts.

\textbf{METHODOLOGY}

For the purpose of this research rape is forced sexual intimacy defined as rape by the victims themselves. Because subjects participated

\textsuperscript{1}As a topic, rape is sociologically relevant when considering the management of spoiled identity. But consideration of rape also has practical utility. Forcible rape has become the fastest rising crime of violence in the United States, which makes rape a serious social problem. The 1975 F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reports listed an estimated total of 56,090 forcible rapes, an increase of 48 percent over the 1970 statistic. For the same time period murder increased 28 percent, robbery by 33 percent and aggravated assault by 45 percent (F.B.I., 1975:22).
in the study in response to a newspaper advertisement asking for rape victims, only those persons who defined themselves as such responded.\textsuperscript{2} No restrictions were imposed on these self-definitions. Any person who defined herself as a victim of rape was interviewed.\textsuperscript{3}

Qualitative research procedures were followed throughout this study. The specific qualitative approach used follows the school of thought exemplified by Garfinkel (1967), Cicourel (1964), Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Denzin (1970). This type of research method employs exploratory and descriptive techniques. Exploratory studies are designed to yield a greater understanding through description of phenomena in terms of the everyday, common sense knowledge of the persons interviewed (Garfinkel, 1967). The use of the idea of understanding incorporates Weber's concept of Verstehen (1947), where the researcher strives to capture the in-the-life imagery of the informants — that is, he tries to describe their social world from their point of view.

\textsuperscript{2}See Appendix A for further methodological discussion.

\textsuperscript{3}Since 1970 rape has become an issue of national concern, as well as one of the leading issues of the Woman's Liberation Movement (see Medea and Thompson (1974), Brownmiller (1975), Burgess and Holmstrom (1974b) and Griffin (1971) for examples). As rape has become a social problem of increasing significance it has received much more attention in the media than ever before. Prior to 1970 the emphasis in the literature about rape was directed mostly towards problems of protecting innocent men from false charges (Chappell, Geis and Fogarty, 1974:248). Since then rape literature has become much more concerned with the rights and responses of victims. However, very little has been written concerning the process of formulating a credible account and deciding to tell. Weis and Borges (1973) present the most detailed discussion of this topic. Sutherland (1970), and Gager and Schurr (1976) also discuss it. In spite of the amount of publicity rape has been receiving, talk about rape is complicated by the fact that American society does not have a clear, universally agreed upon definition of rape. The spectrum of interpretations of rape ranges from very narrow to very broad. Narrow definitions generally refer to rape as genital intercourse with a virgin without her consent. In contrast, a liberated woman's perspective is, "Rape is any
In this study, the goal was to produce a descriptive account of how rape victims decided to tell others that they had been raped. What do they think about? What are their concerns? How do they feel about themselves? How do they perceive their situation, and based on that, what do they decide to do? In other words, the purpose of this paper is to describe the decision to tell from the point of view of the rape victim herself.

To make the description even more relevant to the perspective of the informant, the story of telling has been presented to a large degree in the victim's own words. It is the everyday, customary language of the informants themselves that the most accurate description of their subjective experience can be found. The assumption has been made that constructing an account and deciding to tell is a production which can be best described by the persons who have actually had those experiences in their lives.

Qualitative methods were used in this project rather than formal survey techniques for several reasons. First of all, since so little is known about rape victims (we do not even know how many there are), and hence about telling, it would be difficult in a questionnaire survey to know exactly what to ask victims concerning these particular problems. An exploratory approach allows the victims themselves to choose the topics to be discussed, and to talk freely and at length about those topics. Additionally,

sexual intimacy forced on one person by another" (Medea and Thompson, 1974:12). The Webster New World Dictionary defines rape as follows: "1. a) the crime of having sexual intercourse with a woman or girl forcibly and without her consent, or (statutory rape) with a girl below the age of consent, b) any sexual assault upon a person... 4. any outrageous assault or flagrant violation" (1972:1177).
an exploratory and descriptive study is a contribution in its own rights since it "gets inside the victim's heads" and gives "outsiders" a glimpse of the world from the eyes of the "insiders". Greater understanding of the lives and concerns of rape victims can be gained from these in-depth descriptions of the victim's own point of view.

Interview

An unstructured, casual conversational interview was used to obtain the data. This type of in-depth interview allowed both for the coverage of the interviewer's original topics of interest and the emergence of new topics at any time throughout the interviews. As new topics emerged from the informant's accounts, the interviewing procedure was adapted, with new questions added when necessary (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1967:186). No question was assumed relevant in this type of qualitative research until documented in actual accounts given by informants (Driessen, n.d.:38). In other words, if the informants did not mention a particular topic, then it was not relevant to a description of the informant's subjective situation. In addition, order and phrasing of comments and/or questions by the interviewer was adapted to each separate informant and the course of that interview (Denzin, 1970:125).

Interviews averaged an hour in length and were completely tape-recorded. Before the interviews were begun, possible psychological effects of recalling the rape and discussing it in great deal were explained, and each victim signed a form consenting to be interviewed.

---

4 Simon and Gagnon (1967) have used and demonstrated the appropriateness of this type of exploratory, in-depth interviewing of small samples in their sex related research.
Sampling

Rape is a very personal experience. For reasons of rights to privacy I did not wish to make the initial contact with the victims. Instead, I wanted them to contact me, and therefore I reached informants through advertising. Advertising was chosen over such alternatives as going through crisis center and/or police files for names of victims. The newspaper ads read as follows:

RAPE VICTIMS are needed for confidential interviews in research related to rape relief. Both reporting and non-reporting victims are asked to call Woman's Place.

The telephone number of the local rape relief line was given both to protect the researcher from unwanted calls and to add credibility to the advertisement. When victims called, some basic information was obtained over the phone by the woman on duty. The information sheet was then picked up by the researcher and the victim was phoned for an interview appointment. Eleven women responded to the ads. Nine were interviewed. Six more informants were obtained through word of mouth and all were interviewed. In total, fifteen interviews were completed. The study sample included victims who told only friends and family about their having been raped, victims who reported to the police, and a victim who had never told anyone until participating in this study. The victims interviewed were all white, middle-class women. Most of them were in their twenties. (See Appendix B for further victim characteristics.)

\[5\] A liberal definition of rape includes the possibility of men as victims. However, as no men answered the ads, only women were included in this study.
Analysis of Data

The data were collected, coded and analyzed simultaneously throughout the study. This method, termed the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:106), allowed the researcher to adapt the interviews as topics and the developing theory began to emerge. Specifically, the analysis of data followed the method of "topical analysis" proposed by Drissen which is "a method for collecting, classifying, and developing concepts and models from narrative data" (n.d.:37).

As the interviews were processed, it became apparent that victims would talk about similar matters. When analyzing interview transcripts, these important topics and features were underlined and later cut out and grouped together according to topic. In this way, all talk about one topic was isolated and could easily be read at once. These topics which emerged from the interviews were then linked to form concepts and propositions about the formulation of credible accounts of the rape experience. In short, analysis was designed to discover the features that finally culminate in the actual reporting or non-reporting of the rape incident.
CHAPTER 2

THE RAPE

Rape is an act of aggression in which the victim is denied her self-determination. It is an act of violence which, if not actually followed by beatings or murder, nevertheless, always carries with it the threat of death. And finally, rape is a form of mass terrorism, for the victims of rape are chosen indiscriminately, but the propagandists for male supremacy broadcast that it is women who cause rape by being unchaste or in the wrong place at the wrong time—in essence by behaving as though they were free (Griffin, 1971:35).

The specifics of the rape event itself are crucial in determining how the victim will decide to handle the situation after the encounter is over. This chapter describes details of the rape which bear on the victim's decision to tell others about her experience. For study purposes, the rape event can be divided into three phases: (1) the set-up, (2) the sexual encounter, and (3) going separate ways. All three aspects are considered by victims in their decisions to tell. The set-up refers to the events immediately before the rape occurred—what the victim was doing, who the assailant was, and where and how the encounter was initiated. What happened during the sexual encounter—what the assailant did and how the victim responded—is very important when the victim begins trying to decide whether she has a credible story and if she will tell it. The final stage of the event, going separate ways, refers to the way in which the victim was set free and what she did immediately thereafter. Details of the end of the encounter can either intensify any doubts the
A woman may already have about telling or they can reinforce the desire to tell immediately.

BEFORE THE RAPE: THE SET-UP

The rape encounter can begin in a wide variety of ways, from situations where the victim really has no warning of what is coming, to occasions where the threat of rape is obvious from the first few moments of interaction. The exact way in which the rape comes about can be a very important consideration in deciding to tell. In these interviews, the set-ups were expressed as two types: (1) stereotypical, stranger-to-stranger set-ups, and (2) acquaintance rape set-ups.

Stereotypical, Stranger-to-Stranger Set-Ups

The first type corresponds with socially accepted stereotypes about rape. These are cases in which: (1) the victim does not know the rapist, (2) the set-up occurs in a short period of time and is likely to entail the threat of violence, and (3) the victim does not seek out or participate to any great extent in the initial contact. One victim of this type described what happened to her as follows:

I was walking with a friend of mine, home from a friend's house. We'd been visiting some people that lived three blocks away from where I lived. And it was about 9:30 in the evening, in March in Eugene. It was really warm and it was dusk. It was getting dark and the shadows and stuff, but it was still light out. A car went around the block a couple of times with some men sort of hanging out of the windows of it. They yelled at us, got our attention. We didn't pay too much attention to them. They came around the block again. One guy got out of the car and he asked us a couple of questions just to get our attention, and then he pulled a gun and forced us into the car.

To protect the identity of the victims, all person and place names used in this report are pseudonyms.
In this particular case, the men were completely unknown to the victims. The women were unwilling participants who would not have accompanied the men in their car without the threat of bodily injury. This case typifies the notion of a rapist being an unknown man who appears from "nowhere" often brandishing a weapon. In another similar situation the victim described her experience:

I just changed my parking place and the next night when I went to get in my car he was in it behind the back seat. And I didn't know he was there until I got into the car, but he raised up from behind the back seat and said, "Hello," and called me by name and I got out and started to run. And he said, "You better not do that. I've got your daughter." And my response was, "You sick bastard. You don't know what my kids look like. Get the hell out of my car. I'm going to call the police." And he said, "Oh, yes. It's the one with the long black hair that wears the red ski coat...." So, I did go back to the car then. And he told me that he had her tied up at his apartment and that if I didn't go with him he was going to go back and cut her throat. He had a knife, a big, long hunting knife and he said he was going to go back and cut her throat if I didn't go with him. So I went with him.

Another victim described how she was forced into the company of three men against her will, in a slightly different circumstance without the use of a weapon.

I was at a small Christian college, 350 kids, and it was finals weeks of fall semester. We'd been studying in the men's dorm and it was only about 11:00 at night. And Dave said, "I'll walk you home." But in the meantime one of his friends had asked him if he would help him put something, you know, in his car. I don't remember what. So the two guys were standing out front and I wasn't the least bit afraid. It was only three city blocks from one end of campus to the other. You know, and as tiny a campus as that was you knew everybody who passed anyway. And I got about half way in between campus and to one side there was an area where a building had been torn down and they just let brush grow up over where it had been. And three guys grabbed me.
In the above situations the victims said they did not hold themselves accountable for the initiation of the contact, although they did chastize themselves for being "available" (i.e., in the wrong place at the wrong time).

A common variant of the stranger-to-stranger rape is the case of a woman who is hitchhiking. The following victim was hitchhiking when she met the two men who raped her.

And so I hitchhiked down to see my cousin and I spent the week-end there. And I had to get back by Monday and this was a Sunday night. And we just got lost talking and talking and talking. And so it was like 11:00 at night before I started out. And so I was hitchhiking through downtown Oakland and these two kids, two Black kids, in a, oh, it was an old clunky car, they picked me up and they said they were going to San Francisco.

In this account the victim felt completely responsible for the rape because she believed that she brought the attack on herself by hitchhiking.

**Acquaintance Rape Set-Ups**

The second type of set-up occurs in situations where the woman knows the assailant and willingly participates with him in some form of interaction before it becomes rape. These set-ups are more likely to involve elements of friendliness and trust, although the male participants in the relationship can range from someone the woman has just met to a family member or boyfriend. There is a great variety of ways in which an encounter based on these terms can be initiated. The woman may even initiate the contact herself, or at least be a willing participant who is unaware of what is about to happen to her. The following is an example of an acquaintance set-up:
The man who raped me came to visit my family, and they weren't home at the time that he got there. And I had known him previously but not well. And I'd had a couple of encounters with him. He asked if he could wait and I said that was fine. And I left the room and went to the bathroom, and after a few minutes he came in the bathroom and made some suggestions to me which I laughed at. They were pretty funny. I'd never done that before. And he accused me of sexually flirting with him before.

This particular case points out how it is that some victims just do not suspect that anything is out of the ordinary or that they are in any danger. The reason is that they know the man and trust him. The following quote illustrates a variant of the second type of set-up, what is commonly referred to as a "date rape".

He was a boy I had been dating for two months, not exclusively, but off and on. I had also dated other people at the time. But somehow or another he got it into his mind that I was his exclusive property. And I don't know if that is maybe what made him take the course of action that he took. So on this particular day, well, it was night, it was at my house and my parents were gone. They were gone an awful lot. And he came up and we were alone together and we were sitting on the couch kissing. And then he decided that he was going to do this.

This woman felt that because she had been dating her assailant, others would doubt a claim of rape.

If the man is intent on rape, he uses the early phase of the encounter to manipulate the woman into a situation where he can rape her. The set-up for the rape to occur, the degree of victim-offender acquaintance, possible use of a weapon, and where and under what circumstances the set-up takes place are all things which will be considered by the victim later when she begins to decide what to do. It is the victim's consideration of set-up details which makes the pre-rape period important in any discussion of telling.
DURING THE RAPE: THE SEXUAL ENCOUNTER

After the encounter between the assailant and the victim has been initiated, if the woman is not lucky enough to get away, the situation then moves into the second phase, the sexual encounter itself. What actually happens during the rape and the way in which the woman responds are very important factors in determining how the victim will come to view the rape and her role in it. The following topics reflect the most important aspects of the sex encounter from the victim's point of view. Some of the topics refer to stages in the rape process, while others refer to the victim's emotional reaction.

Violence: Threats and Bodily Harm

The rape themselves can vary in many ways. The experience mentioned most in these interviews was violence. Some rape situations are non-violent while others involve a great deal of physical abuse. But abuse need not be physical. For some victims the emotional and mental anguish of the threat of violence can be just as traumatic as actual bodily injury. In two cases which did not involve weapons, the threat of physical beating was a very realistic concern. One woman who was attacked at night in the parking lot after getting off work was not threatened with a weapon, but was nevertheless very afraid of physical injury as a result of the verbal threats made by the assailant.

And the individual grabbed me. He said first of all that he was from a reformatory and escaped. It's a reformatory that they put people in until they're of age to go to regular prison. So I believed him. I wasn't going to argue about that. So anyway, he was saying he had nothing to lose so I'd best cooperate and that type of thing. I decided the best thing to do was, it didn't take me long to decide this. I had visions of getting my head beat in
or something and bleeding all over the parking lot. So I decided the worst thing to do would be, I was in a position where I couldn't fight him off and run. He just threatened me. But I believed him. I think he would have if I would have fought at all. I think he probably would have beat me, to a pulp. He had been drinking so he was all primed for a good fight. I thought, it's not going to be me.

Her description makes it clear that in this instance the assailant's threats were as affective as a weapon, and, therefore, the woman gave into his demands in order to save herself. This particular woman was not physically injured.

In other situations where a weapon, a gun or a knife, was shown to the victim, she reported the same feelings of deciding to cooperate in order to save herself from a very real threat of physical harm. One woman described being confronted with a knife:

And I saw that he had a butcher knife in his hand. And he grabbed the keys, and it was like one fell swoop of opening the door and grabbing the keys. And, so I, and he was saying, you know, "Get out of the car, do as I say or I'll cut you to pieces..." And he kept like pushing me back into the hall, or gesturing me back with his butcher knife and he told me to go into the bedroom. He told me that he could cut me to pieces. I was terrified and kind of paralyzed by my fear for a while and like wasn't able to do anything except think. But, I mean, I wasn't able to think.

Another woman who was faced with a knife described her situation this way:

And then finally they put a switch blade to my temple and said, "Spread your legs honey." I didn't feel like I could physically fight them, not, there was these two guys, and they weren't that big, but still I didn't feel physically capable of; and a switch blade talks.

Again the threat of injury leaves the woman feeling that she has very little choice except to give in unless she is willing to risk being cut or beaten.
Resistance

It was not uncommon for the victims to struggle somewhat, but they described these attempts as ineffectual. Resistance consisted for the most part of scratching, trying to pull away and trying to push the man off. One victim reported that she felt her attempts did nothing except sexually excite the rapist even more. Another woman who tried to fight her way out did wind up being beaten.\(^7\)

He proceeded to pull me down in the back seat and I immediately started to struggle which at the time was, you know, the only reaction I had to it. And then I started to, when I bit him that's when he hit me. I bit really, really hard. And then I had, I started clawing, too. And I started beating him. And so he beat me up.

Another common form of resistance is pleading. Two victims who were raped by dates reported how they tried to talk the rapists out of it.

I was scared 'cause I was talking the whole time, I mean I. That's another thing, you know, as I've learned, you're supposed to try to talk to them. I was begging this guy, you know, I mean I told him I had all kinds of friends that would go out with him and would, you know, go to bed with him immediately. I said, "I know these people. I know a lot of people," you know.

The second "date rape" victim reported:

And I tried explaining to him that this wasn't possible and why. And that didn't work. And so I tried crying. I figured, you know, if nothing else will get him tears will. And that didn't work. He got angry with me.

\(^7\) This does not necessarily indicate that resistance always results in a beating. Other studies have shown that resistance can be an effective deterrent to the crime of rape. See Queen's Bench Foundation (1976).
Feeling Overwhelmed

Another type of rape situation that was reported by the victims are cases where the victim is never really confronted with the fear of actual bodily harm. The man does not threaten injury by beating or use of a weapon. However, in these cases, the victim can be just as terrified and unable to defend herself and ward off the attack. For example, one woman said: "It wasn't like it was armed rape. Is there an armed rape? It was bodily force. It was three to one. I wasn't going to make it."

Another woman expressed it this way:

I don't think he really ever threatened me verbally. He did put his hand over my mouth. It was, of course, it was forced, but he never at any point hit me. He's a big man, and I at that time, you know, only weighed about 113 pounds and it wasn't too hard to subdue me at all.

The helplessness expressed can be enough to render a woman incapable of doing anything to defend herself even if she would have thought of it. Victims describe sensations of paralysis and not being able to think or respond. One victim said: "I just froze inside. I could no more have screamed, I couldn't say anything." In another case the victim reported: "He grabbed me but if I had been thinking I would have unlocked it [the car] right then. I could have locked it and got out of there then". A third victim who experienced a much more extreme reaction said, "I passed out. I was so freaked out I didn't even know. Part of it could be alcohol and part of it, I just know it was freaked." And finally, a fourth victim described how she reacted by saying:

And you'll never believe it, but I still didn't realize at that point that I was going to get raped. It was like I, I was terrified and I knew, I mean I think I just kept blocking it out because it was, it was too horrible.
Talk: What He Told Me

Talk by the assailant during the attack is another thing which can affect the victim's perception of the event afterward. In the following case the rapist planted the idea that there was no point in the victim making a report of the crime. She comments:

This fellow, being sick, he was also very clever. He had rubber gloves on for one thing so there were no finger prints in my car. He used a rubber. And he said he's done this to women time after time and he said, "You don't even need to bother reporting this because you're not going to be believed."

This particular victim did report the rape immediately afterward anyway. However, in two other cases, the ideas expressed by the man during the course of the rape were major reasons why the victim said she chose not to report the crime later.

And he accused me of sexually flirting with him before. That may have been possible. I don't know. And he told me that he thought that was what I really wanted. And I think the reason that I did feel guilty about it is because this man had told me, you know, "This is what you want."

In a second case the victim reported:

I told him I was going to tell my parents, I said, "I'm going to tell. I'm going to tell people what you did." And he laughed at me and he said it wouldn't do any good. And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Because all you'd do is let people know what you've done." And I said, oh, I can't remember. But I remember that I threatened to prosecute him for rape at which point he became nearly hysterical and telling me that what he had done to me was not rape. And I said, "Yes, it was." And he said, "Did I threaten to kill you?" And I said, "No." And he says, "Well, then what makes you think it was rape?" And I says, "Well, because I didn't want to and you made me." And he says, "Do you think anybody's going to believe that?" Well, he absolutely destroyed any confidence that I might have had right there.
Being "Gone Mentally"

For some victims, one method of dealing with the rape while it is happening is to disassociate themselves from their bodies. Three of the victims described how they made use of this coping mechanism during the event. One victim said: "And so, I don't know how long the whole process took. I tried very hard to disassociate myself mentally and was quite successful." Two others reported the following experiences:

So anyway, you know, when I couldn't fight any longer then I just gave up and trying to protect myself I just thought, pretended that it wasn't my body, you know. I was in my head while it was going on, and that, you know, it wouldn't hurt me if I could just, you know. My mind was me, but my body wasn't me, and just disowning my body.

... . . . . . . . . . . . . .

I mean like I think that even while it was happening, I was gone. You know, I wasn't, it wasn't a reality. I would say that I was probably fantasizing about riding a horse, or I wasn't there. And did not acknowledge him in any way.

Many of the details of the sexual encounter are considered when a victim is formulating a believable and tellable account. The accounts in this study indicate that generally a victim is more likely to feel confident and even go to the police if she has been injured, if a weapon was used against her in the attack, and if she feels she has proof of resistance. In situations where victims "froze", were overwhelmed or were "gone", they could not respond by fighting back. They received little injury and, therefore, felt they could not "prove" resistance. These victims expressed less confidence in the believability of their stories. Remarks made by the rapist were also reported as contributing to the victim's doubts that she would be believed.
END OF THE ENCOUNTER: GOING SEPARATE WAYS

When the sex act is accomplished and the assailant is through with the victim, then the third phase of the event begins. At this point the rape encounter comes to an end and the participants go their separate ways. Victims felt that what they did immediately after being "set free" or escaping was very important in determining how others viewed their situation later.

"Immediate Outcry"

The failure of the victim to make an "immediate outcry" can prejudice her case in the eyes of others. Some people in American society believe that a woman who does not report immediately was not really raped. The sooner a woman goes to the police, the better chance she has of being taken seriously, and the better chance the police have of collecting evidence. In some cases, the victim may be cognizant of what has happened and confident enough about what she should do to be able to go to the police right away.

And they let us off near the freeway and pointed at the direction back into town and left us there. And at the time my friend went into pretty bad hysterics and so I knew I was going to have to take control of the situation. So I got the license plate number of the car and we went to a house a few houses down. We didn't go to the first house, there was a big dog there. And so we went to about the next house that looked like it would be reasonable to go up to and we asked to use the phone.

Another victim said:

And I was beat, my face was sort of beaten up pretty bad and stuff, and I got back in though, because we were out in the middle of the country which, you know, was sort of a crazy thought at the time. I mean when I look back on it. And I continued to threaten him all the way back to
town. But he did drive back to town. When we got in town, though, he didn't know where I lived so as soon as we stopped at a stop light I jumped out and ran home, which was probably a matter of 10 blocks or so.

In both of the two cases above, the police were contacted almost immediately, and the first victim won her court case as the man pleaded guilty. The second victim, though, got as far as a trial, but the jury returned a not guilty verdict. Sometimes even "immediate outcry" does not help enough.

**Shock**

In other situations some women reported that they were so shocked and dazed after the rape that they felt incapable of going to the police. Victims frequently reported that they were so confused that they did not even think of calling the authorities. The following comment is typical of the victim's indecision:

And he held my hand walking there and everything. You know, the first guy. And I didn't know what to do. You know, so I went along with them. And afterwards, I kicked myself for not doing everything I should have done. You know, said right there, "Arrest that man."

This woman did report to the police later that night, but no suspects were ever arrested.

**Circumstances of the Victim's Release**

In another situation the victim was more concerned with protecting herself from further harm than she was with "doing something" about the rape. This was a result of the circumstances of her departure from her assailants:

They took me back. They let me off in the middle of the ghetto, you know, it was like one or two in the morning after that. And I was trailed by, you know, it must have been twelve or fifteen of these Black guys, you know, and they're all hollering names at me. Their friends, you
know, and oh, God. It was the most nightmarish night of my life, you know. And I finally, I took salvation in this little dive place, this big, huge fat Black man. I didn't know he was Black at first. But, it was in the shadows, and I talked him into letting me sleep, it was like a cafe-store, you know. They were selling chitlins and beer, you know. And he let me sleep in the front, in the front room all night. In fact, he even offered me fifty dollars. And I just said, I said no, and he said, "Oh, all right. Just stay here." And he was drinking gin, you know, just ewh (sic). But he let me sleep there until dawn, and you know, boy. I just told him I was in trouble. I just said that I needed a place to stay.

This woman was concerned only with getting shelter so she did not feel that she was in any position to call the police, or anyone else for that matter. She never did call the police.

**Taking a Shower**

Other victims reported that they did not want to do anything but take a shower immediately afterward.  

But after he left I got in my car and drove about 55 blocks home. I didn't think to, you know, there was a security officer at the hospital. I didn't even think to go tell him or call the police or anything like that. And at the time, I was living with my brother. And I wanted to talk to him. That was all I could think about. So I got in the car and I went home. And one thing that I did, that you're not supposed to do, is I went in and took a shower. I just couldn't, I could smell the individual's odor all over me and it just made me sick. So, I took a shower.

As with the first two phases of the rape event, the end of the encounter can happen in a variety of ways. Victims who are most confident about their stories and who are cognizant enough of their situation may

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8 Taking a shower can destroy evidence and if a victim is contemplating calling the police, it is not a good idea.

9 For this woman, the shower did not turn out to be a great disadvantage. She did report to the police and the hospital was able to gather the necessary evidence from her person. The rapist confessed before the trial.
make an "immediate outcry" and even go as far as calling the police. Other victims reported feelings of shock, or desire to seek safety, or wanting to take a shower as a primary concern after the rape. Some of these women were able to evaluate their situation and decide to tell someone a short time after they took care of their immediate needs.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, a rape event framework was established. The rape accounts were divided into three sequential stages for the purpose of study: (1) the set-up, (2) the sexual encounter, (3) going separate ways. A variety of circumstances in each of these three stages was described by the victims. Set-ups were of two types: (1) stereotypical, stranger-to-stranger set-ups and, (2) acquaintance rape set-ups. Victims described several aspects of the actual sexual encounters including violence, resistance and talk. Victims also discussed their emotional reactions to the sexual encounters. Description of the third stage of the rapes, going separate ways, included discussion of "immediate outcry", shock, circumstances of the victim's release, and taking a shower. These specific details of the rape events were considered by the victims when they began to evaluate what had happened to them.
CHAPTER 3

"DAMAGED GOODS"

There is what might be called a universal curfew on women in this country. Whenever a woman walks alone at night, whenever she enters a bar or movie theatre, whenever she hitchhikes, she is aware that she is violating well-established rules on conduct and, as a result, that she faces the possibility of rape. If in one of these situations she is raped, the man will almost always escape prosecution and the woman will be made to feel responsible because she was somehow "asking for it", which would mean almost anything. Although women are expected to be attractive, if they are attractive to the wrong person at the wrong place and time, they must take responsibility for some stranger's actions. For women the luxury of going out for a walk alone, of getting away for a few minutes, is almost impossible. Every day of their lives, women learn to accept the fact that their freedom is limited in a way that a man's is not. There is a curfew on women in this country and it is enforced by rapists (Medea and Thompson, 1974:4).

One of the many problems faced by rape victims is the realization that "rape victim" myths imply that victims are "damaged goods". One woman expressed how once she was raped and lost her virginity:

"...then I was damaged goods, [I was] used and no decent boy [was] going to want [me]." In the course of the interviews many of the victims expressed ideas about the identity and credibility problems of rape victims. The basis of those problems lies in the myths which are accepted in American society. These stereotypical notions dictate which events will be socially and legally defined as "real" rape, under what circumstances "real" rapes will occur, and the nature of "real" rape victims as well as "real" rapists. Rape myths are the subject of the
first part of this chapter. Following that, the effect that these myths have on the victim's conception of herself — the problem of spoiled identity — will be discussed.

RAPE MYTHS

The women in this study indicated that they felt the major problem with rape is that society as a whole has not yet accepted the fact that women really are raped against their will. The myths about rape which are common in our society are seen by the victims as a major contributory factor to the lack of understanding about rape. This section is an exploration of these myths.

The myths and stereotypes surrounding rape gives a false impression of who the victim is and what the crime is like for her. This increases the rape problem for the victim since ultimately victims wind up trying to counter popular notions about rape.

Common beliefs about the victim are: (1) she enjoyed the rape; (2) she probably asked for the rape, especially if she was hitchhiking; (3) a normal woman cannot be raped by one man; (4) every woman secretly wants to be raped; (5) lack of resistance on the part of the victim means that she consented to the sexual advances of the man; (6) women often make false rape charges; (7) the woman enticed the man and lead him on; (8) only "loose" women with "bad reputations" are raped; and (9) she was probably somewhere or doing something that she should not have been (Goettsch, 1977:22). This set of attitudes about the rape victim is summed up well in the following phrase: "Nice girls don't get raped and bad girls shouldn't complain if they do".
However, there is one group of victims who do escape the above assumptions. These are women who are judged to be victims of "real" rapes. The following myths dictate a stereotypical notion of what society will accept as a "real" rape, or one in which the woman really is not to blame. Very few rapes ever meet all of the criteria of a "real" rape. For study purposes, rapes that do not meet these criteria will be termed "free sex". In "free sex" situations the woman is considered to be responsible and the man is, therefore, the innocent victim falsely accused. "Real" rapes involve one or more of the following elements:

1. the rapist is an uncontrollable sexual psychopath,
2. the rape occurs in a dark alley, bushes or other such place where the rapist waits for innocent women,
3. some sort of weapon is involved,
4. the victim and rapist are strangers,
5. the victim is chaste,
6. the victim has physical injuries and torn clothing from her violent struggle,
7. the rape is interracial, and
8. the rape occurs at night (Goettsch, 1977:22).

The negative aspects of the "rape victim" stereotype listed above do not apply to victims of "real" rapes. "Real" rape victims are not held responsible for their rapes. Throughout the rest of this chapter the designation "real rape" will refer to situations where the man is considered guilty and the woman is innocent. Other situations will be defined as "free sex".

One woman who was the victim of a "real" rape made the following remarks about her situation:

It was nice to have a husband around at the time. Like I said, a cut and dried [case]. I was married and I was physically assaulted and injured, which made the whole trip a whole different story than for the girl that might be wondering, "Did I put myself in that position?"
According to Goffman, part of the problem with any stigma is that before becoming stigmatized, most persons subscribe to the same social beliefs about this stigma as everyone else. This was true for the rape victims interviewed. One victim commented on the attitudes she had before her own rape by saying:

I knew one rape victim who was raped by a bunch of Indians in a van. My thoughts on Carol were she's pretty loose already. You know, wore real scanty clothing, lead an extremely loose life. You know, but I realize a prostitute can be raped now. I had these prejudices before. I figured, you know, that if you jumped into a van with a bunch of Indians and you're dressed like Carol dresses...you're asking it...You know, so you don't take Carol that seriously. Neither would the police, neither would anyone else...

I thought she was loose sexually, dressed loose, drug loose, footloose -- and it would be just like her to hop into a van with a bunch of Indians and get raped. You know, I wasn't surprised when she told me...I have the same prejudices and crap everybody else does. Well inculcated values.

Victims are a part of the culture and so they learn the same set of beliefs about rape, rape victim and rapist. Goffman explains by saying:

One phase of this socialization process is that through which the stigmatized person learns and incorporates the standpoint of the normal, acquiring thereby the identity beliefs of the wider society and a general idea of what it would be like to possess a particular stigma. Another phase is that through which he learns that he possesses a particular stigma and, this time in detail, the consequence of possessing it (Goffman, 1963:32).

When the crime of rape actually happens to a woman, she then realizes that the rape beliefs she took for granted before are not necessarily so in her case. The complication comes from the fact that the victim knows that she did not ask for the rape, but at the same time she believes that most rape victims do bring this misfortune on themselves. The two beliefs contradict themselves and the woman winds up questioning
herself. She wonders, "Did I ask for it? Was I teasing him? Maybe I shouldn't have been out there alone. Did I really want it?" One victim commented on this by saying, "I think with a woman there is always a feeling that afterwards, you know, was I dressed seductively? Did I smile at him in a way that he interpreted as being an invitation?

The very fact that the woman does feel guilt and self-doubt points to the fact that she possesses a set of beliefs similar to those of the rest of society. Otherwise, why feel guilty and doubt yourself, especially if no one else knows about the rape?

The situation is further complicated when the victim begins to mentally anticipate the responses of others when they learn of the rape. When she imagines the scenario of telling someone, she wonders whether she can convince the person that the rape was not her fault. If the other person feels that it was her fault, then the victim faces the stigma of becoming defined as "that type of woman". The myth follows that she is no longer "decent". Raped women are "damaged goods". Once violated the victim may be changed for life.

The way in which a woman determines the anticipated response of others to her revelation is by comparing her rape event to the set of myths about the stereotypical "real" rape. Then she considers how her rape measures up. Since she already knows the criteria of a "real" rape, she is in a good position to perceive her rape from the point of view of American society.

How can she prove that it was not her fault? Does she have injuries? Did she scream? Are her clothes torn? Does she have a reputation as a "nice" girl? Was the man a stranger? Did he attack her in a place where
it was proper for her to be in the first place? How was she dressed? Was a weapon involved? These questions and others must be considered when a victim decides how her situation will look in the eyes of others. With the rape myths as the criteria for comparison, it does not seem surprising that rape is one of the most under-reported crimes in the United States (F.B.I., 1975:22). Certainly, very few rapes ever meet all the requirements of a "real" rape. It is no wonder that so few women express the willingness to risk the humiliation, disgrace, and suspicion that disclosure is likely to bring. Victims know that others are likely to assume the worst about them.

The following letter to the editor of the local newspaper where the study was conducted illustrates the set of rape myths:

How could a 21-year old woman LIVING with a man she's not married to, not wearing a bra, hitchhiking with a backpack and getting into a pick-up with a STRANGE man call RAPE?...

If it was an innocent child -- yes, rape -- but with her morals, what do you expect of a man? They are human and are not known as a stronger sex. If what she says did happen, of which I have my doubts, I would prefer the words "pure sex" instead of rape.

Also, how would the law officers and the defendant establish a time of four minutes for all this to take place? If she was as afraid as she stated, time would mean nothing. She wouldn't know exactly how long each of her actions took place from the time she left work until she returned home....

I think the 21-year old woman stinks for sticking a man -- any man -- with rape. She's old enough to know how to act and dress like a lady; not a common pick-up like she was dressed during the incident last August.

The man in question also has a young family. What about them? What about him? Is 10 years in the penitentiary a fair sentence for a so-called rape?...

Should a man go to prison because of the sayings of an ill-moraled woman? (Schulz, 1974)
The assumptions and beliefs professed by the woman who wrote this comment, clearly shows that, for the victim, concern with credibility and belief are realistic problems.

An additional myth which complicates things for the victim, is the notion that a dead or severely injured victim is more "socially acceptable" than one who is not (Goldstein, 1976:23). One woman mentioned this in discussing a self-defence talk she had given. She said: "A young woman came to me at that lecture and she said to me, 'you know, my mother would have rather seen me dead than raped and live to talk about it.'"

If the woman survives the attack without much injury then she is in a difficult position. She knows full well that the lack of injury indicates that she may have consented to the sexual act. If she calls rape she may be regarded with suspicion, at best.

Another aspect of rape which makes telling problematic for the victim is that proof of the act of intercourse is not enough to establish it as rape. First, the victim must define the act as rape herself and then she must convince others that her definition of the act is correct. Otherwise, the event never becomes "officially" defined as rape. Without an official definition as rape, the event is just "free sex" and no crime has been committed.

The final myth that will be discussed has to do with a woman's past sexual history. This myth states that women who have willingly had sexual intercourse outside of marriage cannot be raped. Not only are they no longer virgins, but they are also considered to be "promiscuous". According to this belief, virgins and chaste women are the only women who can be legitimately raped. This means that once a woman has agreed to have intercourse of her own free will outside of marriage, she then becomes an open target for any man who is looking for "free sex".
To summarize, the set of rape myths which have been discussed in this section bear very heavily on the victim who is attempting to decide if she will be believed. They also define the victim as having questionable moral character. The strict criteria of a "real" rape which are dictated by these myths were seldom met in the study sample. The farther away the woman's situation is from the stereotypical rape, the less confidence she feels. How can she expect that others will believe her story when she is feeling guilty and responsible herself?

SPOILED IDENTITY

The result of the victim's comparison of her rape and herself with the social notions of a "real" rape and "rape victim" is a series of long-term personal effects. With the incorporation of "rape victim" into the woman's life experience comes a reassessment of herself. Rape spoils a victim's identity. It says things about her which she never thought possible before. She knows what rape victim means socially and she now must come to terms with that reality and what it means about her. Goffman describes the ramifications of this problem by saying:

"Discovery prejudices not only the current social situation, but established relationships as well; not only the current image others present have of him, but also the one they will have in the future; not only appearances, but also reputation. The stigma and effort to conceal it or remedy it becomes "fixed" as part of personal identity (1963:65)."

10 The "violent guy in the bushes" is seldom the reality. Research on rape has shown that many rapes take place between people that know each other, and often even occur in the woman's own home. See Medea & Thompson (1974) and Queen's Bench Foundation (1976).
Identity is defined as including both the woman's own personal conception of herself, as well as her social identity, or how others in society define her. Her self-definition is influenced by how she believes others see her (social identity). Both facets of a woman's identity are damaged by rape. One victim expressed this problem by saying:

It wasn't the act itself, it wasn't that that did me irreversible damage. But, it was the way, it was what happened afterwards, what it did to me, to my self-esteem, to my emotions, to my ability to relate to other people, men in particular. The fact that I wasn't, it's difficult to explain. It was the emotional thing afterwards that I couldn't deal with. The way I saw myself and the rest of the world. You know, it wasn't the one sex act itself that destroyed the next ten years of my life. It was the fact that I couldn't deal with it emotionally. I don't think anybody can.

**Change in Self-Concept**

Victims expressed that they felt they were different after the rape. Being raped somehow changes a woman. She is no longer the same person she was before. Being known as "Sally Smith, rape victim" is different than being known as "Sally Smith". For obvious reasons, the victim may not want others to know about these new, negative attributes she fears she has. The victim's own belief in the rape myths causes her to have doubts about herself and so she fears that others will doubt, too.

One victim commented on the effect that social rape conditioning has on the victims:

The whole attitude of people has to change. Because it's the outside attitudes that really influence, it's the attitudes like, "Well, she asked for it", or "What was she doing out at that hour anyway?" Those kinds of things. That has to be changed. Those outside opinions are kind of what rules what's inside you.

The woman's self-doubts about her behavior can lead to self-doubts about her character and identity. The victims reported a variety
of ways in which they felt their self-concepts had changed as a result of the rape. One type of change was feeling less attractive.

I just felt, I felt ugly, I felt vicious, I felt ugly. I've gained, I've gained a lot of weight, and I, I've, how can I say this? I seem to, it was negative. From there everything that I did was negative.

Only that it just occurred to me to say that I wanted to be ugly afterwards. I cut all my hair off. I didn't want to be attractive. I thought if I'm attractive, men will want me. I wore shitty clothes. I wanted to be unattractive. I did everything I could. And I lifted weights constantly and I ran five miles a day and swam two miles a day. I was obsessed. I had to be strong. I had to be able to fight.

I used to really like the idea of trying to be a sexy woman, trying to look sexy and everything. And I was flattered by, you know, comments that men would make or attention that they would pay me. But now, you know, if I'm passing and I hear a man make some remark about me or something, it's really frightening to me and I do everything that I can not to encourage that kind of thing. The whole idea of sexuality has changed. It's disgust.

Two other women mentioned that the loss of their virginity during the rape was very difficult for them to deal with as they changed from virgins to "rape victims":

More like I had lost something that was really important to me. The number one feeling that came to me was, "My God, I'm not going to be a virgin if and when I get married". A year after I was raped, like the following fall, I came back to Astoria and I was flunking out of school. But, I wouldn't have been if I hadn't been pulling trains every night. And picking up, oh God, picking up people and taking them home and not even remembering who they were. I was rationalizing. I think I was rationalizing not being a virgin. Well, it doesn't matter now so I might as well not let it rot, right?

You know, virginity was like a commodity that you used to catch somebody. This is what made you marriagable.
And with that gone, what else did I have to offer? Besides which, if you lied to him or just didn't say anything about it, and then on your wedding night he found out you weren't a virgin, which is a bunch of bull, he'd turn you in for a new one, or something. I don't know what I thought. I really believed that to have lost my virginity made me undesirable.

Other changes mentioned were losing the ability to trust people, feeling like an outcast in one's own mind, not liking oneself, feeling rejected by God and then rejecting religion as a result, feeling worthless and feelings of vulnerability. An example of vulnerability:

Especially since I'm taller, I always felt, had a real great belief in my ability to fight anyone off. You know, goofing around with guys I'd maybe been going with, just strength-wise and stuff, I always, I'd never thought about rape very much, but I felt that I could beat someone off. And this really damaged my opinion of myself as far as what I could do in a crisis situation. Because that first hit, you know, I couldn't believe it. I mean, I'd never been hit before in my life. God, I mean, a couple of hits and you're just, you know, I mean, sure I'm still struggling, you know, but, God, it's unbelievable.

Another woman who felt strong self-dislike explained:

I didn't like "me". For a while I believed him, you understand, that I had asked for it. And I thought, "Boy, if I'm the kind of girl that asks for it". Mixed up with the guilt, of course, was really bad feelings about myself. I felt very unworthy of any kind of love or attention or demonstration, you know. I would find it extremely difficult to have my mother or my father put their arms around me. I always felt I wasn't worthy of that.

A victim who experienced the same feelings of self-dislike commented:

If someone gets really freaked out about rape, most people do, but, if you get so that you are really going to crack up and lose it, like I did, it's because of self-hatred in the first place. That is so intense and it is so heavy in our culture. It puts such guilt and such hatred upon you that if you've got a low self-esteem anyway, you've had it.
For most of the victims, then, the rape resulted in a definite long range damage to their self-esteem and their identity as a person. Some of the women have worked through these feelings over time, but it takes a lot of work and a great deal of time. And even then, ghosts of bad feelings remain.

Guilt

Feelings of guilt seem to be one of the hardest things for a victim of rape to get over. Even for the women who have dealt with the rape crisis fairly well psychologically, and those who went through a rape for which they have legally been absolved of any responsibility, the guilt feelings persist. Some victims said that even though they knew the rape was not their fault, they knew they had done nothing to provoke the attack and they knew it was ridiculous to feel guilty, the guilt remained on some level, though it may have become less evident. Only one woman out of fifteen was able to say that she really did not feel any guilt. Her case contains one very important element which is lacking from all the rest. She accompanied the rapist and did his bidding as a result of her belief that the rapist was holding her daughter captive and would kill her if the mother did not cooperate. She felt that she had no other choice but to go along with the man. She could not take the chance that he was lying, and said that she would do the same thing again if she had to. In this case, there really was no way in which she could reproach herself for her actions.

There were two other victim's who expressed only a very slight amount of guilt. One was forced into a car at gun point by three men she did not know, and she has been able to accept the fact that the rape was
her fault more successfully than any of the other "guilty" victims. The other woman was hitchhiking when she encountered her two assailants and she has dealt with the experience by deciding that the rape really was her fault, and then accepting that and being glad she was not treated any worse than she was. She said:

Well, the situation was so shady in the first place. For me to be hitchhiking in downtown Oakland in the middle of the night, was crazy. You know, and to get in that car when the vibes were bad, that was crazy, you know. I, I just felt like it was my own Karma, you know, that I was reaping what I'd sown. I just felt like it was teaching me a lesson that I needed to know.

The same woman, when asked what her reaction would have been if the men had forced her into the car at gun point, said that this situation would have been a "completely different thing". She would have been mad and she would have called the police for sure because: "That's crazy. You can't let things like that happen. You know, that's a different thing". Yet, she was able to "write off" her real rape situation. It seems then, that for this woman as well as the rest of the victims interviewed, the problem revolves around the question of whose fault the woman believes the rape ultimately is. If the woman has any doubts about her own culpability, if she feels in any way that it might have been her fault, then she is likely to feel guilty.

Several different aspects of guilt were mentioned by the victims. One way women feel guilty is when they look back at the rape situation and reproach themselves for what they failed to do. They chastize themselves for not doing the "right thing" or for being "dumb". Expression of embarrassment over the way the victim handled the situation was common.
One victim reports:

I guess I basically was ashamed for my lack of control of myself. Well, I just, I didn't want to deal with the situation in public, you know. I didn't want to tell other people what I'd done and what had happened as a result.

And another woman said:

I mean, I don't want to tell because I feel that, I feel so embarrassed as if I failed, I'm inadequate, you know, and that I don't want to tell anyone.

And in explaining how she resolved the problem of her rape and resultant pregnancy, the following woman admitted to feelings of self-devaluation, embarrassment and stupidity:

So I, this is why I haven't been able to talk about it since then because this is to admit to the most colossal stupidity of all. I married the bastard! I married him! Isn't that insane? How could I tell people afterwards what had happened and then admit to having married him? He was the only one who would want me. That's what I thought. I believed it absolutely. He's the only one who would ever want me.

One victim who did not feel "stupid" herself, speculated that embarrassment over feeling "stupid" is one of the reasons other victims do not want to report the crime.

Yeah, to be really ignorant is the worst thing that can happen. I think a lot of people are. Maybe that's why they get so freaked out by the whole process, and they don't report and they don't because they can't, you know, deal with it. Well, you know how when you feel like you've been really stupid and really taken advantage of, there's that aspect of it, too. When you're just perfectly set up you just...maybe you don't want to talk about it because you feel so dumb and that point of view.

If the above opinion is correct, then feeling embarrassed may even keep women who are victims of stereotypical rapes (the rapist jumping out of the bushes with a gun) from reporting to the police, not because they feel responsible, but because they feel they were "dumb".
A different type of response was described by a woman who "went overboard" trying to prove that she did not fit the stereotype of "a loose woman who had been raped." She said:

But like that's another thing, you know, when I meet men now, I really, really try hard not to worry about the way I talk or something. But, I know for many years after that until this latest guy that I've been going out with, like if I met somebody in a bar, or if I started talking with someone, I often would, or the second or third statement would be, "I'm not going to go to bed with you..." I felt like I had to, you know, let that be known, you know.

Another woman who was a virgin before her rape, mentioned that she felt guilty because she thought she had let down her family. She said that she had always been taught that her first sexual experience would be very romantic, with a man she loved, under the moonlight. She felt that she had let down her family because this was not the way it happened for her. This particular victim became pregnant as a result of her rape and this increased her guilt feelings. She gave the child up for adoption which was another factor in her guilt. She felt that she had again failed her family since she had not lived up to the romantic notions of love and childbirth that she had been taught. She reported:

But, I still feel guilty about it because you grow up with this fairy tale image in your mind that your first lover is going to, in fact, when I was in Oregon, I had fanticized enough to the point where I thought this man, the rapist, as my first lover. Because I wanted this child to be the way a child is supposed to be conceived. I was also seeing a psychologist at the time.

Much of the guilt that women feel revolves around considerations of stereotypical notions of rape and "rape victims" which have been mentioned. Many women expressed guilt about their own behavior and blamed themselves for the rape. "Was I leading him on? Maybe I did want him to do it all along. I was drinking. I didn't scream. I didn't call the
police. I invited him home. I accepted a ride with him. I shouldn't have gone out there. I allowed these things to come about. So, maybe it really was my fault." One woman typifies this problem by saying:

I mean, I've heard arguments for everything else, you know, but, I got into the car voluntarily, I said yes. I didn't notice the license number. All this stuff that comes afterwards but it does fit into everything why I could blame myself. And like you said, I've heard arguments and evidence and everything else, but it's still something that's with you.

Another victim describing her childhood rape said:

...I believed in God and I knew that this must be wrong. It had to be wrong. And so I prayed that I'd be forgiven you know, thinking that it was my, yeah, somehow, it was my fault...I don't know how I figured that out. But somehow I thought I was bad, there was something wrong with me.

Two victims who won court cases commented on this lingering guilt self-blame. They remarked on the fact that even though they won their cases and were, therefore, legally absolved of personal responsibility, they still went through a great deal of trauma as a result of the rape.

One woman said:

And really, all in all, until about a year and a half ago, I really did think that I had not suffered the trauma that most women had. Because it was so biased for us. But you know, I don't believe that now. Because that kind of trauma in a crisis situation is there no matter what. I mean, it's there, even if the police are nice to you or not. That interruption of your life, you know, that powerlessness of a feeling, and the dominance, the whole trip of men against women. The whole trip of your sexuality, self determination, being interrupted by that and having a lasting effect on your sexuality, which it does, even though it's a violent crime and it really doesn't have that much to do with sex, it interrupts your sex, interrupts your sex life.

And the other woman summed up the general feeling of a link between guilt and social pressures by saying:

I just think the society is so powerful in making women feel guilty that I can't believe any woman could exist.
that could and I think it's so powerful, the guilt is so powerful that you can't get away from it. And, I think it's also a process where women can suppress their guilt and I know I have, until I've realized that I really have felt guilty. But, I've felt, you know, and I think that my case is particularly revealing from some perspective, because it's as you say, a stereotypical, legitimate case. So that for me to feel guilty, I just take that as affirmative proof that I'm not alone, because I know that most women do. And that you can find anything to feel guilty about, so that I feel, still feel in some way, as though I have to justify why I went through this long truck back and forth with him. That it was like, I think I do feel as though well, I shouldn't have been that dumb, you know. I feel guilty. Maybe I was implicating myself, maybe I really wanted it if I was allowing myself to be led along further and further. I mean, I know I didn't want it, but. You know, there's that side of me that just keeps saying, "Well," you know, that "why did you go along with it this far?" Then, you know, "Are you dumb?"

Finally, a third victim expressed her feelings about rape trauma:

It's not the physical rape itself that does so much damage, unless you're injured. It's more what happens after -- what rape means -- the social notions about rape and the psychological and emotional trip the women go through after. That's the real hang-up. It's like a compound fracture -- one thing on top of another. Maybe that's what the big problem really is for some women. They have to take in so much all at once -- it overloads the circuits. They've been raped, they realize rape can happen to them -- they're vulnerable -- and all of a sudden, it hits them what that means -- what rape means about them.

**SUMMARY**

In this chapter the rape myths of our culture were discussed to provide a picture of the social notion of a "real" rape against which all rape victims compare their rapes. The rape myths outline the criteria that must be met if a rape victim is to be considered "not responsible" for her rape in the eyes of society. Most rapes do not measure up to the stereotypical standards. As a result, the victims feel guilt and self-doubt.
It was pointed out before that the rape victims generally believe the same myths as the rest of society. So, when a woman becomes a victim, she is already endowed with a complete set of negative assumptions about "rape victims". As a "rape victim" herself, she knows that all of these negative attributes now apply to her. The "rape victim" concept and the woman's previous self-concept do not mesh. The victim is then in a situation where she begins to alter her concept of self and take on a new spoiled identity -- that of a "rape victim".

This section on change in self-concept described how victims expressed their reassessment of themselves as a result of their rapes. Several different types of change were noted. Women expressed feelings of ugliness, worthlessness and vulnerability. All victims but one expressed some degree of guilt. These negative feelings about oneself can function to keep a woman from telling. She may feel embarrassment because she has lost her virginity or feels ugly. She doesn't want others to know how "stupid" she was. To tell of the rape reveals these secrets and if she experiences self-doubt about her own culpability, then she is liable to feel that others will doubt her story also. She questions her credibility and is reluctant to tell. Hence, all of these aspects of her changed self-concept come to bear on her assessment of believability and her decisions to tell.
CHAPTER 4

DECIDING TO TELL: THE VICTIM'S PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF HER SITUATION

The stigmatized individual may find that he feels unsure how we normals will identify him and receive him (Goffman, 1963:13).

Suspicion and even hostility are often the response a rape victim receives when she tells of this crime. Therefore, it is necessary for these victims to contemplate seriously exactly who they are going to tell, if anyone at all. Victims worry about what others will think of their rape story and of them. When they do elect to tell someone, they generally select persons who they believe will be supportive. A person selected as likely to be supportive may be a friend, parent, brother or sister. The more confident the victim is in the credibility of her story, the more likely she is to move out of her circle of close, trust intimates and tell others. The first person told may even be a stranger encountered immediately after the rape if the woman is in serious need of help. If she is very confident she may even go to the police. But, before anyone at all is told, most victims must first go through a process of evaluating their case for credibility, and then deciding exactly who they will tell.

For many rape victims, then, telling is a very selective process. The elements of this process — the specific aspects that are taken into account by a victim who is contemplating telling — will be the subject of this chapter. The following discussion refers primarily to decisions to
tell made soon after the rape. These early decisions are part of the way the victim decides whether to "do something" about the rape.

BELIEVABILITY: MENTALLY MAKING THE CASE

When a woman begins to weigh the idea of telling she considers how her story will look in the eyes of others and she comes to a determination about who, if anyone, will be most likely to believe her. There are two groups of facts to be considered: those which she feels make her story believable and those which may make her story seem doubtful. Many of the details of believability which are considered here are reflections of the myths about rape explained in the previous chapter. These myths involve value judgements about what is considered to be "appropriate conduct" for women, and what women can expect if they do not follow these norms.

One victim of a stereotypical "real" rape discussed the rape myths by explaining how they helped her to establish the credibility of her account:

I was married. I dress like this \[\text{jeans, tank top with Levi shirt over, tennis shoes}\]. And I was pissed off that night so I was walking around like Joe Namath. There was not a, you know. I said [to myself], "I wasn't wiggling my hips. Right. You know, wiggling hips attracts rapists. I wasn't dressed like a dishy number on a July night 'cause dressing like a dishy number attracts rapists. I wasn't loitering in the streets. I was purposely going from one end of town to the other". And that series of events lead me to believe that I was, you know, there was no call for it, right? I was indignant about the fact that I wasn't asking for it and I didn't enjoy it. Right. Same concept as anybody else has about it. Who could ever do that to me the way I dress, walk and look. I didn't set myself up for it...so I make the distinction too [between "real" rape and "free sex"].
The same myths which helped to make some women feel confident about their story and their own lack of responsibility for the event made other women feel that they would appear responsible for what had happened to them. It was the women who felt their stories were questionable who were least likely to tell.

There were many details which victims felt could incriminate them. Women expressed the feeling that it is really the rape victim who is on trial in a rape case. It seems that for this crime, others, and often the victim herself, assume guilt on the part of the woman. The victims said they felt that they must prove that they did nothing improper or illegal. In these interviews the victims expressed the belief that they would have a much harder time proving that they were innocent than would the accused. Therefore, for a woman to tell, especially if she goes to the police, she must feel that she has a very good case, with little room for people to question or doubt her. For those who have less confidence, it may be only a few trusted, close persons who are told, or it may be no one at all. And, even for those who do have the courage to go to the police, self-doubt and guilt are present, nevertheless.

Most victims were apt to judge themselves harshly, partly out of belief in the rape myths, and partly out of the fear of what other people would think of them. This fear of the response of others was a consideration which underlied all thoughts about telling. The women worried that others might think them stupid, in addition to not believing the rape story. Victims expressed shame and embarrassment for being duped and did not want others to know "what they had done". Women feared that knowledge of the rape would change the woman's image in the minds of others.
I thought, gosh, would anybody believe that? And I thought would anybody believe me? I thought, well gosh, you know, I suppose everybody would think I was bad. I was just that way and everybody would laugh.

Fear of not being believed does not pertain only to legal authorities. Many women also feared that significant others (friends and family members) would question them and possibly blame them for their conduct, even when the "damaging conduct" was in no way associated with the specific rape situation. One victim expressed her fears about telling her parents:

I mean I think a lot of it was that I was unsure how they would react and if they got upset and started accusing me and not believing me then. But if they gave me a hard time I knew I couldn't handle it, that I didn't want them to give me a hard time, or I didn't want to deal with it with them.

Another woman described her fears of reporting to the police and telling her husband:

Well, I could just, you know. I rehearsed the whole scenario in my head and I could see them [the police] saying, you know, "Well, you brought him home. You went skinny dipping with him. You smoked hash with him. You didn't scream," you know. At that point I didn't even know if I would tell my husband. That was one of my first thoughts. You know, because, well, what would his response be?

**Physical Evidence of Rape**

One of the most frequently mentioned aspects of believability is physical evidence of the rape. This evidence is either proof of penetration, such as sperm discovered by a doctor, or it is evidence of struggle such as bruises, scratches, cuts, or torn clothing. Typical comments were:

If we could have had the trial immediately afterward, like my hands were all black and blue from hitting him. And my face was really bad and he had scratches and stuff and it would have been evident that I struggled a lot, you know.
Another woman remarked: "But, I was so damn sore and I had bruises. It was quite obvious that I had been raped," while a second said: "...and my clothes were torn. I don't even remember why my clothes were torn. But, I remember that they were." A third woman who underwent a medical exam said: "And the county medical examiner came in and he did the tests and he told us that the tests were positive." One victim who was severely cut during her rape described how her injuries greatly enhanced the credibility of her story, as a result, when she told, everyone believed her:

The rape was compounded by a vicious assault and there's where I had all the cards in the basket. Husband comes — boom. You know, immediate sympathy. Police come: "A crime has occurred. Without a doubt a crime has occurred. A woman has been assaulted at knife point on the street. It doesn't matter what for. She's been injured." And that's all that went, I'm sure that was on their minds. That was on the hospital staff's minds too. Everything was medically oriented, not around the rape, but over and above the rape, the assault part.

The women felt that a lack of physical evidence was a deterrent to the credibility of their stories.

Past Reputations

A different type of element which definitely helped women to feel more confident about telling was when the man had a reputation for illegal activity prior to his association with her. One woman reported that the man who raped her actually had a reputation as a rapist among his peers. In another case, the victim reported that when the men were charged for her rape, they were already in the county jail on another charge:

And we found out later that they had done several armed robberies and they had shot a guy who ran a 7-11 type, small grocery store, and he became a permanent paraplegic as a result of it.
Another victim said:

The car was stolen it turned out. It was turned up, with blood on the seat and everything. It turned up a couple of days later in the same general area. There was some stuff in the back seat that had been stolen from a department store.

However, there were some cases where the woman felt that the man might have a better reputation than hers and this was considered a negative aspect for her case. One woman said:

There were three of [the local college's finest football players. And they're "All American" boys. You know, they have other ways of venting their hostilities. They can do it on the football field rather than all over somebody else. And so I couldn't see anything in my favor. I couldn't.

Following from this, one of the most common problems mentioned was the woman's fear that her character could be made to look doubtful, that she could not convince others that she was "nice", and therefore, that people would regard her with suspicion and possibly think that she got what she deserved. Even in cases where this fear appeared unrealistic to the interviewer because of the circumstances of the rape, the very thought that this fear might be borne out was enough to keep the victims from telling. The following comments are typical remarks made about this concern:

But, here were the things against me: One, I'm dating a Black boy. Any girl that's dating a Black boy must be getting it regularly so what the hell's one more.

I think I came across as the kind of woman that goes to parties and drinks. You know, what I was doing that summer was not exactly, you know, working in the corn field, you know. Women that do that were, you know, a little...
Other signs of "questionable character" mentioned by the women included drinking before the rape, sleeping nude, going somewhere unescorted, leading an undesirable lifestyle prior to the rape, hitchhiking, wearing revealing clothing, and having an active sexual history (even if it was a previous rape).

But, by the same token, if the woman felt that she had a past reputation which was good, then that was viewed as a positive factor. The following comments illustrate this point: "I was a high student, a good student, fairly quiet girl, didn't go out drinking and carousing or anything like that." Another woman said, "And being that kind of girl I was anyways. I still am, I suppose. Well, I mean a nice girl. I mean a good student and attractive back then. I didn't drink in those days. Sophomores didn't drink."

Victim's Upbringing

A related type of positive aspect which was mentioned by some victims was their upbringing and social background. Some of the victims mentioned that they just had never been treated in their lives as if they were not telling the truth. One said, "I've never thought that they might not believe me." Another woman expressed her feelings this way:

But, I think maybe, I don't think I'm over emphasizing this somehow, but, the fact that I grew up in a small town in New England in a middle class family really made me feel on some gut level that I would be believed.

As the above quote mentions, this feeling of certainty on the part of the victim can be largely a result of the victim's social background. Another woman brought up this same topic:

Well, the college that I went to had a lot of clout in the community. I mean, these people were not to be
messed with, the ones that, I mean, the Mills students were known as good, you know. They were good people. We went to a private college which was very upper middle class.

Women who assumed that they would be believed also felt that their confidence about telling in some way helped them to come across as even more believable.

Maybe I was, maybe I came on in a way that, you know, impressed people enough to take this seriously, because of the way, because of the way I was raised and because of the way I'd been handled most of my life.

Another woman said:

I mean, I think it is really largely determined by class and that my manner, my way of coming across socially, as believable. I mean, I've had that experience through my life so I know that I am believable.

Victim's Response

Women also mentioned that they worried that they did not respond the way they "should" have during the rape. If they were "frozen" and could not respond, they felt that others might see that as a sign that they did not want to resist. If they did not call the police immediately afterward, they felt that this fact would be seen as a sign that they defined the situation as rape only after it was over. Many said that they regretted that they did not do something else, that they wished they could go back and change their response or actions to make themselves look better and to make their story look more convincing in the eyes of others. One woman expressed this concern by saying:

Like the next morning I started saying, "Why didn't I scream? Why didn't I call the police? It was my fault. I shouldn't have gone swimming." ...at the time it would have made it worse to call the police. But, now I think I would feel better about myself if I had. I wish I would have called the police as soon as he left.
Responsibility for Initiating the Encounter

A situation where the woman did not feel that she could be held accountable for initiating the encounter was mentioned as another positive factor. One victim expressed it this way: "Like it was not, it was not a situation, like we weren't in a bar, we weren't yelling at the people in the street, we weren't, there wasn't any other kind of situation."

Another woman said:

I wasn't, I can't see that walking out of your place of business or work, to get into your car, you know, how that can be a seductive thing. I had a suit on, a skirt. But it was before those short, short things. It was, you know, regular length. And a sweater or shirt under, and jacket. And none of those things, I never, you know, I was not hostile or anything.

In summary, victims make an assessment of their responsibility for the rape. If a woman feels that she can prove that she really is "nice", that she did not "ask for it", that she really fought and resisted, that she was not somewhere she should not have been, and was not doing anything "wrong", then she is likely to feel that other people will believe her, and she will at least tell her friends and family. She may even report to the police if she feels that she has a strong enough case.

One woman summed up the victim's feelings about believability by saying:

But, it's hard to tell somebody that, that you've been raped. It's almost hard to tell with a straight face because you don't know if that person is going to believe you. You don't know if anybody is going to believe you.

"THE SYSTEM"

A different aspect considered before telling was the victim's feelings about "the system" they were contemplating dealing with. "The
system" referred to the police and the courts. Part of the complication with "the system", as expressed by victims, was that "the system" was, for the most part, staffed by men.

The Police

If the woman regards the police as alien, then she is more likely to feel that they will not believe her, and hence, she is apt to not report this crime. Most of the women expressed feeling that if they were to go to the police, they would be put through a rough interrogation and be asked many intimate questions. Comments typifying these prior beliefs about the police are as follows:

And, I know the way police treat people, the way they did at the time, treat women that have been raped. I mean it was all that question of did it really happen and can you prove it, and all this kind of thing.

I think that my age was a really big factor in the fact that I, you know, the police were still the guys that were getting me for curfew. They were the bad asses. And I don't think I ever really thought about dealing with them.

And besides, I thought the police would just laugh me out of there for the situation, you know, for hitchhiking like that. I just didn't think they'd take it very seriously. I was thinking of things, of women who get raped are asking for it, you know. Women that hitchhike are asking for it.... You know, I knew what it was like. You know, police are still sort of ominous, to me, the power thing.... I just feel like I would have been grilled about my sexuality, about the situation, about hitchhiking. "How much have you hitchhiked?" You know, "Do you do this all the time? Don't you know that this happens to girls that hitchhike?" Let's see. And also they would have said something about the way I was dressed, which wasn't quite, you know, matronly.
I've just read historically and I've known too, from experiences that I've had with police, that I view the police as a hostile force, as an adversary, you know. And I know what happens to women that report rape. I just, from the moment that it happened, the thought of talking to police, you know, about that was just as alien as anything to me. I just couldn't.

Most of the women said that they felt they could not come out of a police interview without incriminating themselves in some way, no matter how small. Obviously, for many of the victims, the police are not considered allies and going to them with a report of something as personal as a rape charge, is simply out of the question.

The Courts

The other part of the system mentioned was the courts. Three victims almost went to trial, but at the last minute the offenders confessed. When these victims spoke of the possibility of a trial, they did so with fear and apprehension. One victim remarked how glad she was that the trial never actually came up:

So after it was over I really felt tremendous relief that I didn't have to testify.... But I didn't feel much else except for I was really glad that it was over.

Another woman whose trial was cancelled said:

But, I remember when I got that letter I just flipped out... I went home that night and I called about seven people long distance and told everybody, "Ah, great!" I felt really great relief that I didn't have to go to trial because I was scared of that, scared of that attorney.

The one victim in the sample who did go to trial described her experience:

And so the trial was a real dilly... It's like everything else, I felt like they didn't believe me, you know. And so it was a typical example of a real badgering [defense] attorney, I mean, just really.
It can be seen from these comments that a rape trial is generally viewed as a difficult trauma for a rape victim, and is, therefore, another reason some victims were reluctant to report the crime of rape to law enforcement agencies.

The other system complication that was mentioned frequently was the attitude of men. The women expressed their belief that many men do not really think there is such a thing as rape. If this feeling is correct, because the legal system is staffed by men, women do not have much of a chance of being taken seriously. One comment exemplifies this idea well:

Well, men are in the power position and people tend to believe men. Women are supposed to be seductive and all of them secretly want to be raped so how can you believe a woman who says she was raped? A lot of people believe that, you know, women say no, but they don't really mean no, you know.

Another woman carried this notion even further by saying:

Well, I feel like even the judges, they are remembering when sometime they forced their wife or girlfriend, forced them a little bit, and they think that's the way it should be.

A third woman simply said: "I think that in a lot of men's minds there is no reality as rape. That sex is always pleasurable and only a distorted woman could consider rape a reality".

SUPPORT NETWORK

A different consideration which enters into a woman's decision about telling the police is whether or not she thinks others will support her. This consideration is mostly of concern when a woman thinks about going to the police with her story. It seems very important that she feel she has at least one other person on whom she can depend to support
her and help her go through the ordeal of going to the police and maybe even a trial. One woman said: "Feminist friends didn't even question that I would prosecute; they were very supportive". Another commented:

Well, I guess I was practically thinking, you know, that if I'm going through with this I have to let them [parents] know. I guess in any type of crisis I immediately turn to my parents.

And a third victim expressed that:

You know, I guess I really knew and understood the relationship with my brother and felt confident in it. I knew [he] would believe me because that's the relationship we have in our family.

Having a support network seems to be so important that some women will not even consider going to the police without it, even if they otherwise feel that they might have a chance.

If I'd been pressured I probably would have gone, but, or if I had someone to back me up while I was doing it. Yeah. If my father was there to help me through it, you know, 'cause I wouldn't want to do that alone.

Two other women also mentioned that if they had had someone to support them at the time of the rape, they might have made a different decision regarding reporting:

Because, well, the first thing my mother said when I told her was, "I wish you had pressed charges. I would have backed you to the hilt." Knowing that someone would support me if I asked them was important.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

There was no one in my life to guide me. [I needed] a mother to talk to. Some older person around to guide me, and there wasn't. It might have been different, I think that way, if that had been the case.

Another woman said of her parents:

No, I can't see them actually supporting me through a court trial. No. I don't think they ever would have. There wasn't anybody I could talk to.
In a related situation, one woman who initially wanted to report to the police was talked out of it by a trusted friend, the friend she expected to support her if she had gone to the police. She said:

Before I got out of the emergency room the Dean of Students was there. And the man was a man that I really trusted. Really trusted. And I was there studying Christian thought. And he pulled the, "Well, you know in the Bible it says you shouldn't press suit against your brothers." Well, I'm not a Bible studier and I wouldn't have disputed that one way or the other because I didn't know if it was true or not. But, it really freaked me out, and it really made me think. And he said, "I don't think you realize what you're going to go through by pressing charges and making all this publicity and having people taunt you," and so on and so forth. And at that point, he was still someone that I very much trusted. And I respected his opinion very much. And so, you know, I said, "Fine, just take me home..." The trip that I get when I look back is not so much against them [the rapists]. It's against the people that sold me down the river, not to, you know, press charges. Because those were people I trusted.

In the cases where the woman expressed the feeling of being all alone with no one to help, guide, and support her, she did not report to the police. A support network of some kind, whether it be friends or parents or other family members, seems to be essential in deciding to tell the police.

SUMMARY

This chapter explored the rape victims decisions to tell. The main questions for these women are: (1) whether to tell at all, (2) whom to tell, and (3) what to tell. Rape victims making these decisions consider the credibility of their stories. They weigh the pros and cons of their rape events and imagine how the events will look to others. Aspects which are considered are physical evidence of rape, past reputations, victim's upbringing and the victim's response to the rape.
Rape is not a crime like burglary or robbery where a victim is more likely to call the police without hesitation. Rape victims, for the most part, do not report to the police. Many victims expect hostile treatment and disbelief from "the system". The victims are also intimidated by the thought of court proceedings. Therefore, these interviews have indicated that going to the police requires a victim's strong belief in her own lack of culpability for the rape and at least one person who will support her and help her go through the legal process. Rape victims want to be believed. They also want to tell a story which does not ruin their identities. And the more their stories reflect stereotypical notions about rape, the more credible the women will judge their stories and the more people they may tell.
CHAPTER 5

TELLING: ANTICIPATION BECOMES REALITY

What happens when a woman is raped? As we have seen in many cases, the woman tells no one about the assault and keeps the "secret" to herself for years or even for a lifetime. Some women go through life with a terrible burden of unexpressed guilt and fear because they felt no one would listen sympathetically, that no one would help. Other victim's confide in a relative or friend, who may or may not sympathize, and go no further. From all the evidence, the vast majority of rape victims never report the crime to any social authority (Gager & Schurr, 1976:65).

When the victim tells others about her rape, her problem changes from one of deciding whether or not to withhold the rape information, to one of having to manage the now revealed, spoiled identity. As she tells, the situation changes from one of taking others into account mentally through anticipated responses, to actually taking the others' behavior into account in reality. The victim may tell many people, including the police, or she may tell only one friend or relative. In either case, her thoughts about telling becomes the reality of actually doing so. This chapter will deal with what happens when the victim actually tells different types of people and how she deals with the reactions.

THE FIRST PERSON TOLD

For many of the victims, the reaction of the first person who was told was very important in determining if she would subsequently tell
others. In some cases, the first person told was consciously sought out by the victim for this purpose. For example, some women knew immediately that they wanted to talk to a brother or parent. In other cases, the person who was told first was selected through coincidence. For example, one woman burst into her apartment covered with blood and her roommate and a friend were there. It was obvious that something was wrong; the two friends happened to be there, and they were the first ones told. If others had been there, they would have been told first. In these coincident situations, the first person told did not necessarily have to be known to the victim. Some were complete strangers who were approached for help. These strangers were consciously sought out, but only by the coincidence that they happened to be there at the right time, not because of who they were.

To whomever that first story is told, that person can have a profound influence on the victim's attitude. If the person is supportive and comforting, the victim is likely to be more confident about telling others, possibly including the police.

For those who did call the police, it is interesting that none of the victim's interviewed actually called the police themselves. In every case it was someone else who insisted upon and made the call. For this sample then, active participation and support of another person was necessary for the police to become involved. Some victims said that if it had been just up to them, they never would have made the call. The victim's definition of the crime as being reportable must be backed up by a similar definition on the part of someone else. This aspect was also discussed in the section on Support Network in Chapter 4.
The victims who got a skeptical or unsupportive response from the first person told of the rape did not have any serious thoughts of calling the police. These victims, as a whole, tended to have stronger feelings of guilt and personal responsibility for the rape. This was true even when the victim never actually told the person they wanted to confide in (say, parents), but truly believed that the response would be unsupportive if they did tell. However, when the first person told was reassuring the believing, the victims seemed better able to deal with any negative responses received in later telling.

A victim who received an unsupportive response from the first person told, who happened to be her father, gave the following account:

And so Dad asked me what happened and I ended up telling him. And he just said, "Well, that's what you get kid." You know, because he knew I'd been hitchhiking for a while and he was worried, but he just was, he didn't want me doing it anymore. But, you know, since I was on my own he didn't really, I don't think he really wanted to deal with this.

In contrast, women who received a great deal of support, and for whom someone else wanted to call the police, made the following comments:

And I told her I was raped. She veered. She was driving on the wrong side of the road and she veered off the side. And then she asked me to repeat it. "What?" And I was really crying hard then, you know. She put her arm around me driving. And she talked to me. My dad was out of town. So everything was on her shoulders. And she is the one that called the police and everything.

And then I told him what had happened and he got terribly upset. He's very protective and so forth. And then he said we should call the police. So then we did. But, I don't think that if it had been up to me, that I would have called the police.
So, when I got ahold of my friend the attorney on the phone, he said, "Well, I'm going to call the police to come and get you." And I said, "No, don't call the police because they are going to come and get our families if we do that." And he said, "No, now you're going to have to trust me to take control of the situation. Now do you trust me?" And I said, "Yeah, I trust you." And he said, "OK, well, we're going to call the police to come and get you." So, the police came pretty soon afterwards.

... ... ... ... ... ...

And my roommate was home and her boyfriend was there and I just came rushing in. And I had blood all over and my clothes were torn. And she was, I was really upset and crying and it was like there was really no decision on what to do really because Don came back in and said, "We're calling the police." I mean that was all. And also the fact that Patti and Don were there and they saw me and I reflected how bad I really looked and there was no question. I think, they, Don, really pushed it, too. Like they were on the phone immediately.

In other cases, though, even when the first person told was supportive of the victim, if that person did not suggest calling the police, the victim was not likely to do so either. Usually in these situations the victim had no serious thoughts about calling the police anyway.

She was really comforting. She, in fact, blamed herself for the whole thing. And she, well, she didn't discuss calling the police or anything. I think it was evident to both of us that neither one of us could have handled that.

Belief and support from the first person told can give the victim more confidence in her story. Therefore, the first person told can have a very important effect on whether the victim will then continue telling others, including the police.
THE POLICE

In the seven cases where the police were called in, the women reported a variety of responses when they told the police.

Good Treatment

In three cases the treatment of the victim was reported as being "pretty good".

And they were pretty nice to us. We felt like, that we were lucky because the police did not treat us as if we were guilty and the reason they didn't is because we went to a private college which was very upper middle class, and the men were Chicanos. So, it was a cross-racial rape. And from the beginning, it was assumed that they were guilty and we were not and if they had, I might have felt more guilty.

Well, anyway, I talked to this woman. She was very intelligent, very verbally adept and was, you know, very sensitive to the whole situation... They seemed very willing and very anxious to get a conviction. They said, "This goes on all the time. We just get so many cases of this and we can never get any convictions. "Now," they said, "we have two witnesses". When I look back on it I can't empathize with people who have trouble getting a conviction because it was like everybody was really pulling to get a conviction. The states attorney worked like crazy to argue on all five counts.

Mixed Responses

In the other four cases, some of the law enforcement people were defined as obnoxious by the victim while others were seen as helpful, so the responses were mixed.

In one situation, the police officer who reacted negatively toward the victim, was a woman herself. The victim reported that:
I really felt the scum of the earth after she got done with the questions. But, I remembered her saying, "Are you aware of what could happen?" And, "You have to be absolutely sure this is the man," and all this other stuff. You know. All these repercussions that would happen if I were to accuse the wrong man. No, she didn't come out and accuse me, but she really insinuated. I don't remember for sure, but it seemed like she gave me a penalty for lying, bringing false charges. I don't remember, but it seems like there was something. But it was just her, I was really afraid of her.

In another case, the victim reported that the law enforcement people, as a whole, were rude and obnoxious, with the exception of two detectives. She characterized her experience with the sheriff's office as follows:

And the one thing that upsets me, well, one of the things that upsets me so much about the way the law enforcement people handled that, was this young deputy that probably wasn't more than 21 or 22. When I was yelling at him to get somebody out there to try to find my daughter, he said, "Jesus Christ, Lady. We've got every fucking car in this whole Goddamned town on this case. Now what the hell else do you want?" And he treated me like I was bothering him when he had something more important to be doing, you know. That was the mildest feeling that I got, was just that I was in their way, of their important work.

She also commented on one officer who came to interview her at the hospital:

While I was on the examination table waiting for the doctor, a drunk deputy breezed in and said he was sent to interview me. And the nurse had to swear at him to get him out of there. And I heard him in the hall then. He left the door part way opened and he called his office and said something to the effect that, "I don't think she got raped at all. I think she's just looking for an excuse to get home late." And I picked up something and was going to throw it and the nurse held me. So, I'm not too impressed by the way the law enforcement handled things. There was a lot of things that happened that didn't need to happen. Just because of ineptness and stupidity as far as I'm concerned.
From these comments it can be seen that to some extent a victim's
fear of a harsh and skeptical response from the police is justified.
However, in other situations the police response was good.

AT THE HOSPITAL

Not every victim who talked about her experience at the hospital
reported to the police. Some went to get medical attention of their own
accord. Two women reported very bad experiences as rape victims with
the doctor or staff on duty:

And this doctor walked in, this old doctor, probably in
his late 50's or early 60's. He had grey hair. And the
doctor says to me, "Well, are you sure you were raped?
Or did you just get a little rough with your two Black
friends out there?" And I had my foot in the stirrup and
I took it out of the stirrup and I kicked him in the jaw
and knocked him backwards. He turned around and walked
out and I soon had another doctor.

And I was examined and the doctor was the only one who was
a creep in the whole thing. He was highly insensitive.
He thought it was very stupid that I didn't punch my way
out. And he had an assistant in there who was an idiot.
I mean the comment was made when I walked in, it was very
late. It was like probably 1:00 in the morning. She made
this stupid comment to some idiot male sitting there. And
she said, "Oh, here comes another one of those whores to
get checked out." And I was just so angry that I couldn't
even respond. I just thought, "You people are just so
incredibly stupid that I'm not even going to waste my
energy telling you, you know, about the situation." I
just sat there and glared at them and finally they shut up.

But again, there were other reports of very good treatment. One
woman said, "And the people at the hospital were really great. I mean
the doctor was really good. He was really understanding."

As with the police, reports of doctor and hospital treatment were
mixed. The medical community response probably depends a great deal on
the personalities and beliefs of the particular personnel encountered.
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Victims frequently expressed apprehension about telling some people who were close to them. Part of this fear stems from a strong desire to protect the feelings of loved ones, and also from the hope that intimate people will still love and accept the victim and be supportive of her. In some cases, the first person told was a significant other. In other cases, significant others were told later.

Parents

Parents are among the most difficult people to tell. One woman summed up the typical feelings about telling parents very well.

But it was a hard decision for me to tell my parents, which I did. I didn't want to hurt them. That it would be too upsetting for them. But, I'm not sure how much that's to be believed either. I mean because I think a lot of it was that I was unsure how they would react and if they got upset and started accusing me and not believing me, then, it's sort of a contradiction of what I just said isn't it? But, if they gave me a hard time I knew I couldn't handle it, that I didn't want them to give me a hard time, or I didn't want to deal with it with them. They were very, very supportive, and they were, I think very much upset that I, their girl, had such a horrible experience. But it was, you know, they have never doubted me. Or certainly, if they ever did, it was never anything I ever felt or they said. But, they are both very, I don't know if naive is a fair word, but they lead a very sheltered life and they're very private people and so it was something that once I said, we never spoke about again.

For the most part, parents were very supportive of their daughters. However, several victims mentioned that once the initial discussion of the rape was over, it was a subject that was never brought up again. Some were concerned that if anyone would make them feel guilty, it would be their parents. So deciding to tell parents is, for some victims, a
difficult decision. Yet, there is the feeling of wanting to level with parents and have them know about what is going on in one's life. Two victims mentioned that while they expected their mothers to fall to pieces and their fathers to be strong when they were told the news, the situation actually turned out just the opposite. One victim who was a virgin when she was raped, told of how very supportive and kind her father was when he was told of the event:

He was really incredible. He was really, really neat. I locked myself in the bathroom while my mother told him. And he came and knocked on the door, "Rosie." And he held me like I was a little three year old girl and we both just cried. He stroked my hair and held me and loved me.

Not all situations turn out as nicely as this one did, though. Another victim who had a very difficult type of experience with her mother said:

And I think my mother was just real ashamed of me, you know. She acted like it was my fault because it was my lifestyle that had brought this thing on her. Because I had had several lovers, you know, and she knew it. I have, if anything ever comes up again, I don't know if I will ever tell my parents. Because my mother does not deal with crises. She's always had someone taking care of her. And it's really hard on me because she just goes into total hysterics everytime. She did it to me again this last time and I'm just not going to deal with her anymore.

This same victim described how her father also made her feel guilty:

...when my father came to get us from the airport, on the way home, he sort of gave me a talk about, "Now you really have to be careful out walking alone by yourself at night." Of course, I wasn't alone, I was with my friend, and it wasn't night, and it was in a quiet neighborhood.... So that was the only thing that made me feel that it was my fault. That, that I did accept the fact that it was possible that I shouldn't have been walking out like that.

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Another victim describes how she started to tell her mother and then stopped because of her mother's remarks:

So then I tried to talk to my mother about it. I said something about, "How old do you think somebody should be before they have sex?" And she, you know, gave me a really dirty look and said, "I thought you'd be a virgin when you get married." And so I thought, and I backed off in a hurry.

Mate

Another decision to tell which can be very difficult for the victim is deciding to tell a boyfriend or husband. Telling a mate can entail some of the same problems that telling parents involves. Women do not want to hurt their mate, and they are also afraid of being rejected when they very much need support. One woman who was rejected by her husband reports her experience this way:

He never was any real emotional help when there was a crisis. And I didn't want to see him and when I finally did he said, "Don't be silly, I'm your husband." And that's as much support as I ever got out of him. And this situation ultimately had a big part in the break up of our marriage. It destroyed our sex life. He couldn't have anything to do with me after that and we had some other problems, but this... It was just a matter of he felt that I'd been soiled and he couldn't... It's a tragedy, but it's something I don't guess he could help anymore than I could. We never had any kind of life together after that at all. It was just down the drain. A few fumbling attempts and him turning away from me.

Some victim's mentioned that they did not want to be physically close with their mates after telling of the rape. This is explained very well by the following comment:

Jim wanted to put his arm around me and comfort me and I didn't want him to get anywhere near me. I felt, and it was strange because I know that that is the rape victim's first response that she doesn't want to have any other contact with men. I was thinking, "Well, I wasn't going to have this response," you know, it was like it's so strange knowing how you're statistically
supposed to react and then finding yourself reacting that way saying, "I shouldn't do that, I mean, I know and maybe I can get beyond that if I know that that's the way most people react." But, it didn't help. And so I, I really didn't want to touch him at all and that hurt him. I think he was confused to some degree, I mean, I think it was also understood, but, it was also confusing.

As with the first person told, the response to significant others can have a great influence on whether the victim will continue to tell. Victims reported that belief and support from these others was very important to them.

THE PROBLEM OF PEOPLE KNOWING HOW TO RESPOND

Another problem that was mentioned by victims in terms of telling was that many of them noticed that people did not know how to react when they heard of the rape. This problem was mentioned not just in reference to persons very close to the victim, but also in regard to people in general. When people do not know how to respond this complicates telling even more for the victim, since a confused, uncomfortable response on the part of someone else makes the victim feel bad, too. One woman remarked that, "People feel uncomfortable. They don't know how to say, 'How do you feel?' I don't know how to say, 'Hey, ask me how I feel.' You know."

Three other comments also illustrate this problem:

I noticed that a lot of people had the reaction that they didn't know how to react. Yeah, they didn't know what to do. You know, they felt bad, but they really didn't know what, you know, what do you say? And how do you deal with this? And, of course, I couldn't tell them because I was trying to deal with it myself. So, I kind of felt like, well, there's a lot of misbeliefs.
Most people didn't know what to do. Just, I didn't want them to um, to have some, you know, shocked and sorry feelings, etc. I, I wanted them to react to me as a strong person. And, a lot of people didn't do that.

My boss and another guy from work, we were all out having a drink, and they were talking about their sexual experiences and stuff and they asked me how many men I had had. I said, "Only three," and they just couldn't believe it at all. So then I said, "Well, maybe if you'd been raped twice, you'd have some hang-ups, too." They were shocked, just shocked. Not disgusted with me or anything, just shocked. They just didn't know what to do or how to react.

SUMMARY

This chapter described what actually happened in instances of telling, as reported by the victims. It was pointed out that the first person told of the rape, whether it be an intimate or stranger, can have a large effect on how the victim ultimately feels about the rape. If that first person believes the victim and is supportive, the victim feels more confident about her story and may even go to the police. If the person told is skeptical, then the victim is liable to feel that she really is responsible for the rape. The same can be said of the responses of significant others.

In telling of their experiences with the police and hospitals, victims described a variety of responses, some supportive and sympathetic, and some hostile. One final aspect of telling mentioned by the informants was the problem of others not knowing how to respond. When a person being told feels uncomfortable and does not know what to do, the victim also feels confused and awkward. Telling is much easier for the victim when the other person responds by being concerned, helpful and supportive.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When police, hospitals, courts, legislatures, and ordinary citizens accept the fact that rape can happen to anyone and can be committed by almost all men and that they themselves are part of the social context which encourages or discourages rape, only then will part of the battle be won (Gager and Schurr, 1976:282).

The topic of this study was the problem of formulating and telling a credible account of rape. In reviewing the data that have been presented within the context of this study one can see from the accounts how the telling of rape was problematic for the victim. The problem was one of credibility: "Will anyone believe me?" This problem was expressed over and over again by the victims.

In this report the rape experiences described by the victims were discussed. It was shown that a variety of persons, who experienced a variety of situations before, during and after the rape crimes, were interviewed for this study. This report also examined the stereotypical notions and myths about rape which are commonly held in American society. This discussion included a description of the ways in which victims expressed changes in their self-concepts resulting from the rapes. Following this, a description of how victims decided whether to tell of the rapes was presented. Deciding to tell was revealed a very complex process, one which happened very quickly or dragged on interminably. This process was not necessarily a highly conscious one which was deliberately thought
out. However, some victims did debate long and hard over what to do. When the woman was deciding how she felt concerning what had happened, and how she was going to handle it, she not only considered the situational details of the crime of rape itself and her own evaluation of it, she also considered how her story would look in the eyes of others. The final chapter then described what actually happened when victims did tell various people.

Being believed was terribly important for the victim because if she was not believed then she became defined as a stereotypical "rape victim". That definition attributes many negative and unflattering characteristics to the victim. Thus, her identity and reputation were spoiled publically when others found out. The problem of believability and spoiled identity results from the rape myths in our culture. These myths place most of the responsibility for the rape on the victim. They also define the victim as being "bad", unchaste, promiscuous, and deserving the rape. The situation was further complicated by the fact that before becoming a victim herself, the woman may have subscribed to the same set of beliefs about rape as everyone else. So when she was raped, she already knew full well what that event meant to herself and in the eyes of others. She knew full well what knowledge of the rape implied about the "kind" of a woman she was. Rape victims wanted to avoid the stereotypical assumptions if at all possible. Rape victims wanted to tell a believable story of the rape and thereby protect their own, and others, conception of themselves.

Therefore, from these interviews it became apparent that the more a victim's story differed from the stereotypical rape, the less likely she was to tell anyone at all about it. The question became, "How can I
tell a believable story that will convince others that I am not to blame?" If she had grave doubts about her story, she confided in only a few close and trusted intimates, if anyone. The more confidence she had that her story would be believed, and that she would not be held responsible, then the more people she would tell, moving out from the circle of trusted intimates (although in some cases, due to circumstances, significant others were not always the first to be told). The police were assumed to be somewhere on the skeptical end of a scale of belief to skepticism. Only the most confident victims went to the police.

If our society is at all concerned with doing away with rape, then our popular social beliefs about "real" rape, "rape victim" and rapist are very dysfunctional. As they stand now, our beliefs about rape function to create a climate in which most rape victims feel it is out of the question to tell of the crime, especially to law enforcement officials. Why tell if you feel that no one is going to believe you? Why tell if you feel that all you will get in return is hostility, contempt and perhaps even amusement? These reactions only make the rape trauma worse for the victim. It is not surprising that so few victims are willing to risk this treatment. And if victims do not tell, then rapists will not be arrested. If the rape myths keep women from reporting to the police, then the rapists are safe.

In conclusion, the major observation of this study is that perhaps the greatest problem for the rape victim is formulating a credible account. This is crucially important because believability comes to bear upon the personal and social identity that the victims must live with the rest of their lives. The more the account mirrors what others
(and the victim) typically hold to be a "real" rape, the greater the probability the account will be accepted as credible and, therefore, the greater probability that the victim will tell.
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Queen's Bench Foundation
1976  Rape Prevention and Resistance.  San Francisco:  Queen's Bench Foundation.

Schatzman, Leonard and Anselm L. Strauss

Schulz, Donna

Sutherland, Sandra and Donald Scherl

Weber, Max


Weis, Kurt and Sandra S. Borges
APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

In this section I will present my own account of "doing this study". I will discuss how I became interested in the problem of rape, how the study topic was devised and refined, and some of the problems and experiences I encountered throughout the project. This section is based on a research diary which I kept from the beginning to the end of the project. In this diary I made notes about my thoughts and feelings, ideas I had, comments and suggestions from talks with advisors, reactions after interviews with victims and anything else which I felt might be relevant.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

My interest in the topic of rape grew out of my interest in women's issues in general. I also have had an interest in criminology. When it came time to select a thesis topic, I wanted to combine women's issues and crime as much as possible. Rape seemed a natural choice.

After I had decided that I was going to research some aspect of rape, I pursued the idea by taking a trip to Seattle to the Battelle Law and Justice Study Center. The center was in the middle of a two year rape research program funded by the LEAA. In March of 1976 I spent one entire day at the Battelle Institute. Through a series of interesting
and enjoyable discussions with many people there, I learned a great deal about research in rape. The people at Battelle were very nice and offered me everything that they could think of that might be of help. I came away with a stack of literature and reports, many helpful suggestions, and lots of ideas. I was very excited.

As one of my main interests in the condition of women in our society, I chose to interview the victims of rape, rather than the police, the offenders, or counselors. At this point, I was having trouble deciding exactly what I was going to ask the victims. So, I did some exploratory man-on-the-street interviews on the subject of rape. From these I began to narrow down the topic of rape. I realized that if the victim does not tell anyone about her rape experience, then no one knows about it. That may seem obvious, but at the time it was an important distinction for me. I began to wonder why it is that some victims tell and others do not. What is their reasoning? How do they feel and what do they think? And why is it that some victims report to the police, as well as telling friends and relatives, while other victims will only tell one person, if anyone at all. I began to wonder what was going on with victims in these situations.

With the realization that telling was a specific problem of rape, I also realized that telling was only one topic out of many. I could have chosen to write about being at the police station, attending the trial, becoming pregnant, experiencing emotional problems afterward, or coping with fear to name just a few.

After I knew that I wanted to investigate the situation of the rape victim contemplating telling, I had to decide how I was going to go about it. One main problem was how to go about getting victims to
interview. I decided to try newspaper advertising. I did not want to call women and ask them for interviews. I did not want to take the chance of reminding them of something that they would rather forget. Newspaper advertisements seemed like a good way to avoid these problems. I was not sure at this point if the advertising scheme would be successful. But, I went ahead and wrote an ad and put it in The Missoulian, the Kaimin, and The Messenger, all local newspapers. The ads ran for approximately one week. From this first attempt I received about half of the victims that I needed.

One of the problems about the ads was deciding what phone number to use. I did not especially want to use my own home phone number because of the nature of the ads. Judy Smith, a member of my thesis committee, suggested that I might be able to use the Women's Place (local women's crisis and information line) number. This would save me from using my own number and would also lend credibility to the advertisements, since Women's Place is known to be a legitimate organization which is supportive of women. I attended a meeting at the Women's Place office, explained my ideas and was given permission to use Women's Place name and number in my ads.

The procedure for women who wished to participate in the study was to call Women's Place and give some brief information over the phone to the woman who answered. This information included name, age, address, phone number, hours available for an interview, when and where she was raped and why she wanted to participate. Then I would pick up these information sheets and call the victims back for an appointment.
THE INTERVIEWS

The first actual interview with a victim that I did was not in conjunction with the ads. I know of a local woman who is a rape victim. She speaks publically about her experience and is very interested in working to reduce rape. She was willing to be my guinea pig and go through my first interview. I was nervous. I was concerned about not wanting to offend her in any way and yet wanting to learn as much as possible about her situation and how she handled it. I did not have a set list of questions to ask her. I was hoping that the conversation would start and then flow along from there. Since she was used to talking about her experience, I felt that she might not need too much prompting. I was right. Initially, I explained my project to her and I asked her to just tell me briefly what had actually happened. The conversation went smoothly and I gained more confidence as we continued talking. At the close of the interview she told me that she thought my questions were good and that I had caused her to think about her rape in great depth and in a way she had not thought of it before. She also told me that she enjoyed the conversation. These comments boosted my confidence even more.

From the first interview I was able to draw up a list of topics that I thought were relevant to the problem of deciding to tell. I never would have known about many of these items, since not being a rape victim myself, I have never had to go through the experience of wondering what to do. But, with my exposure to the world of the victim, and my new found confidence that I really could ask these women about their rapes, I was excited to begin the rest of the interviews. There was the excitement
of not knowing exactly what I would find out, but knowing that it would be interesting and important to me.

The first half of the interviews went well. Each time I interviewed a new victim, I learned more and was able to refine my ideas. The victims were very helpful and all expressed eagerness to do whatever they could. In fact, many of them really seemed in need of talking to someone who would accept whatever they said and be supportive. The interviews were situations where the victims could say whatever they wanted about their experience. As a consequence, I was told of many personal, intimate matters. Many of the victims needed someone to confide in. So, I began to feel that in some ways the interviews were really a give and take situation between myself and the victims. They gave me the information I needed and I gave them an opportunity to "spill it all" in a supportive atmosphere. The interviews also gave the victims an opportunity to "do something" to help reduce rape, which they said was important.

For some of the women the rape was a burden that they had carried around for many years, hardly telling anyone. One victim had never told a single other person until she told me. In most of the interviews I took on the role of a counselor as well as an interviewer. Being supportive and reassuring was a very important aspect of the success of the interviews. If I had behaved otherwise, I think there is reason to believe that I would not have obtained such in-depth information, and I could have lost some interviews all together. As it was, every interview that was started, was completed. I think that is quite an accomplishment. Some of the interviews were very emotional. Several of the women cried.
They exhibited nervous reactions such as shaking, twisting their hands and smoking. In one instance, I thought that it might be better if I stopped the interview and I suggested this to the victim. At that point, she got herself into control again and said that she really did want to go on.

The victims really did want to talk about what had happened to them. Since the nature of these interviews was so emotional, I was forced to develop my interviewing skills very rapidly or fail in getting the desired information. It was exhilarating to feel myself sharpening my skills, learning how and how not to say things, and learning how to be sensitive to the victims and pick up cues from them. The experience of these interviews has taught me a great deal about interviewing.

When I had finally completed my first interviews and had them typed up, I placed the newspaper ad again. This second time the response was about the same and I got the second half of my sample. But during the second series of interviews a different thing began to happen. Whereas before, much of what the victim said to me was new information, during the second batch of interviews, I began to anticipate what the women were going to say before they even said it. I began to know enough about the process of being a rape victim deciding to tell that I had a fairly good idea of their thoughts. This point is termed "saturation" in qualitative research. I stopped my interviews at fifteen when I reached saturation.

One thing I learned at Battelle is that researchers should protect themselves against problems of human subjects review. Therefore, I had each victim sign a consent to be interviewed form before beginning discussion. This way the victim was informed and we were both protected.
I made follow-up calls to most of the victims later. I did this both to find out how they were doing and to ask any additional questions that I had. At this time, most of the victims expressed to me how glad they were to have talked to me and that they felt that the interview helped them. Several said that they thought about the rape a great deal for about a week after the interview and that through this thought they were able to resolve some of their unsettled feelings about the experience. They also expressed a desire to read the final report when it was completed. These comments made me feel very successful about the interviews, and also very good that I was able to do something for these women.

FINISHING THE STUDY

As I worked on typing the interviews, many thoughts came to mind about the telling process. But, it wasn't until I was finished with typing and had been mulling these ideas over for a few weeks that I realized that the most important problem the victims had expressed to me in relation to their decisions to tell, was believability. Many of the fears and doubts the victims had centered around this question of credibility. It was not until I realized this fact that I was really able to write. I discovered that the victims knew what had happened to them and they knew it was rape. But, they also knew that because of cultural beliefs about rape, their stories might not look like rape in the eyes of other people. The question then became: Can a victim risk telling and face possible rejection, disbelief and accusing remarks? Can she risk not being believed and then having to deal with a spoiled social identity? Victims are most likely to tell when they are reasonably certain that the
person who is told will be accepting and comforting and/or when they feel that they have a particularly good case.

In the process of this study, I have learned a great deal about research, interviewing, stigmatization, identity management and rape. I have also developed much more confidence in my own abilities.
APPENDIX B

SUMMARY TABLES

These tables summarize information about seventeen completed rapes and one attempted rape obtained in interviews with fifteen rape victims. The total number of rape situations (18) is larger than the total number of victims due to the fact that three of the victim's were raped on more than one occasion. Two of the victim's were raped repeatedly (unknown number of times) during one year of their childhood. To simplify matters, each of these multiple situations was counted as one completed rape. All of the victim's were middle class whites. Eight of the women were virgins at the time of the first rape and three of these became pregnant.

A. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION AT THE TIME OF THE RAPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Age at Time of Rape</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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TABLE 2
N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status at Time of Rape:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS

TABLE 3
N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Rape:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940  (multiple)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960  (multiple)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966  (attempt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4
N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Rape: (Geographical)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billings, Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder, Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula, Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Pleasant, Michigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas City, Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver, Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio, Tx.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Falls, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucson, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento, Ca.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5  
**N=18**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Rape: (Place)</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman's Home</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacker's Home</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car in isolated area</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside in public area</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6  
**N=18**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day of Assault:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Evening</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7  
**N=18**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Victim/Offender Acquaintance:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strangers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight acquaintances</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend or date</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 8  
**N=18**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Activity at Time of Assault:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitchhiking</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding in a car</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;At Home&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting away from home</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 9  
N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Situation of Rape</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape threat immediately evident</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim willingly with attacker and situation changed into rape</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. THE ATTACK

TABLE 10  
N=24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender Restraint of Victim</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical - pinning down</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation - verbal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of physical violence with weapon</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating - Hitting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 11  
N=42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Resistance:</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crying</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleading</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total is greater than 17 as some victims used more than one method
### TABLE 12 N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Injuries Sustained:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruises and scratches (minor)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating - bleeding</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 13 N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon Used:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knife</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 14 N=18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Offenders Per Rape:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Offenders</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Offenders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Offenders</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 15 N=25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender Ethnicity:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. THE AFTERMATH

**TABLE 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Whom</th>
<th>Immediately After Rape</th>
<th>Later</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Relief</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Within 24 hours of the rape
2. Between 24 hours after rape to present
3. Not all totals equal 18 as not all victim's had persons in every category
4. Only mates in the victim's life at the time of the rape were counted. Also, two additional rapists were counted as mates.

**TABLE 17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim's Prosecuting:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lost case</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won case</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender guilty plea</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender insanity plea</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim's Age at Time of Interview</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

SELECTED RAPE ACCOUNTS

This section contains three of the rape accounts as told to the interviewer by the victims. The accounts are presented verbatim, but with slight editing. Remarks by the interviewer were eliminated, and the accounts were edited to read in story form.
STORY ONE

I was on a vacation by myself. My husband stayed here. And I was visiting his sister in New York, who is a really successful vice president of a bank and has a lot of high connections. And we were invited to a party. What it was was a private opening of a restaurant that was run by a Chinese man — I can't even remember his name — who is one of the most influential people. There were all these celebrities there. It was a nice party. It was like 110 degrees that afternoon. And so we went to this party and it was just this lavish posh thing like I'd never been to before. There was free champagne and so we drank quite a bit. I didn't really get drunk. I don't usually let myself drink that much. But Bonnie, my sister-in-law, got pretty loose. And we stayed until like midnight.

And at about midnight we met this guy who was, well, he was the proprietor of a restaurant. He was young, like 22 or something, really good looking, dressed in a tuxedo, the whole bit. Just every bit a gentleman. And he started, you know, talking to Bonnie and I really didn't have anything to do with him, you know. I was talking to other people. And Bonnie said, "Well, I think it's time to go home and go swimming." She has a pool. And I was up for that because it was so hot. By that time, it was still 104 degrees at midnight. It was just sticky hot, just terrible. So she invited this guy to come with us and go swimming and I was really kind of shocked because I'd never done anything like that.
before. I've, you know, never invited a guy home. Well, I've been married, well really for eight years, though legally for only four. We were lovers from the time I was sixteen to now. I'm twenty-four now. So, anyway it just seemed really strange to me that she would invite — the whole day was strange. I mean, this whole lavish party and all those loose people, you know. And, I just figured, well, this is New York, you know.

So we went home and we sat around and drank some wine first and Bonnie said, "Well, I'm going swimming." And this guy, Tom, said, "Well, it has to be skinny dipping for everybody because I don't have any swimming trunks and it wouldn't be fair." So Bonnie said, "Sure." She was up for that. So, and it was dark out anyway. So, we all jumped in the pool and swam for awhile.

And Bonnie and Tom started getting kind of friendly and he was putting his arm around her and all this stuff. And I kind of felt like, well, this is really strange. So, I got out of the pool and went into the house and wrapped a towel around myself. And they got out and went in and we smoked some hash. And they were getting friendlier and friendlier, you know. And so I just said, "Well, I'm going to bed." Well, at first I thought, well, I don't know if I should leave Bonnie with this guy because she doesn't know him and she's fairly loose and I don't know if it's a good idea. But, then I thought, here we are in her house, her kids are there, they were asleep. And, so I'm sure she's really flattered by this young guy, although she's really young looking and acting and everything. I just felt like it's her life and she can do whatever she wants.
So, I went to bed and went to sleep. And the next thing I knew, I woke up and he was in my room standing at the end of my bed. And I was really groggy and I just woke up and he said, "Oh, I just came in to say good-bye." I said, "Oh, good-bye." And he said, "I just gave Bonnie a massage and she went to sleep." And I said, "Oh, well," you know. I didn't know what to say. I was just really sleepy, not even fully aware of what was going on at all. And he said, "How about if I give you a massage?" And I said, "No thank you. I don't want a massage. I'm just going to go to sleep so see you later. It's been nice," you know. "The front door is that way." And he said, "Well, just let me give you a massage." And I said, "No. This is ridiculous. I don't even know you. Get out of my room." And he said, "Well, I'll just sit down on the bed and smoke a cigarette." And I said, "Well, I really just wish you'd leave," you know. "You really shouldn't even be in here." And he said, "Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it." And so I didn't say anything and he sat down and he smoked a cigarette.

And then he just, well he was sitting on the bed and he just leaned over and started trying to kiss me. And I just, you know, tried to push him away. He didn't have anything on. You know, it was strange. So, I just said, "Just leave me alone. Get out of here." And he said, "Don't worry." And he just forced himself upon me. And I tried, you know. I hit at him. I didn't scream. For one thing, well, I was assaulted once before when I was a little girl. In the night. The same type of thing. Someone came into my bedroom. And the same thing happened to me. I just froze inside. I could no more have screamed. I couldn't say anything. It was just like you're paralyzed, or, you know. I couldn't have screamed. And I just kept trying to hit at him and everything. Then he
finally, I just kept beating him and pushing him and I pushed him off the bed onto the floor. And he just got up and walked away and went into the living room.

And I just — I was lying in bed shaking and not knowing what to do. And I, you know, started thinking, "I have no idea who this guy is. He could be a murderer. You know, he said Bonnie was asleep, but, I don't know that. Why didn't she wake up?" And all this stuff. So, I just layed there. I would have jumped out the window, but they were really high windows and I couldn't open them. So, I just waited for him to go. And he came back into my room and I just shook. And he just walked up and started trying to kiss me again. And I just him at him and I said, "Get out of here and don't you ever come back! Just get out of here and leave me alone!" And so he left the room and he went into the living room. And I heard him sit down. And he stayed there for it seemed like two hours to me, but I don't know how long it would be. And then I heard the door open and he was gone.

And I just, I didn't know what to think. I just, you know, I was just petrified. So, finally I got up enough nerve to go out, and I peaked in Bonnie's bedroom and she was sleeping. And I looked in on the kids bedroom. Since I was staying there I was in Laura's bedroom and so — they're ten and twelve — and they were right in the next room. And I looked in and they were sleeping. So, I just went back to the bed and layed there the rest of the night. And I kept thinking, "You know, you're supposed to call the police, you know." But, I had, I thought, what could I say? You know. This guy came home with us. We went swimming naked. We'd smoked hash. We drank. Then Bonnie. I couldn't. I didn't know at that time if anything had happened between them or what, you know.
So, I just, well, it was like I was in shock. I couldn't even think logically. Or, you know, I was just in a daze. I couldn't believe it. So, I waited until morning and Bonnie got up. She had to go to work the next morning and she got up. And I didn't have the nerve to go out and talk to her. And she went to work. And then the kids got up and Laura, the little girl, said, "There was a man in my room last night. And he came in and he said, 'Oh, this is the wrong room,' and left." And that just, you know. Here he was looking for me. So, I just didn't know what to do. I was supposed to be in New York for another two weeks for a vacation. And so I was just, like I said, in shock.

That night when Bonnie got home and we were alone, I told her what had happened. And she was really upset. But nothing had happened between them. He just, he'd given her a massage and she fell asleep and he came in looking for me. I had nothing to do with him. He knew that I was married, so it could have been — and also that my husband was Bonnie's brother. So, you know, he could have realized that there was no way he could start carrying on with me, you know. But, he didn't even show any interest in me at all. And I wasn't interested in him at all, either. And I guess my immediate reaction was, I was just so disgusted and I felt guilty. Like the next morning I started saying, "Why didn't I scream? Why didn't I call the police? It was my fault. I shouldn't have gone swimming." I mean, I realize that it was something that, it wasn't my fault. But, yet I still feel guilty and it's just more like a disgust. Also, I have really strong hostile feelings towards him. I mean I would, I have fantasies about even killing him, you know. Just because I wonder now how many other girls have had the same thing.
It turned out he kept calling Bonnie. He started just calling her and wanting to go out with her. And she, of course, said, "If I ever see you again you'll be really sorry. And if you call, I'll call the police."

The only way that I have ever been able to figure it out is that, you know, maybe people there are a lot looser than I am and he was used to going out with loose girls. And girls that have no objection to going to bed with somebody the first time. He was just, maybe his pride was offended or something when it was obvious that I didn't want to have anything to do with him. So, it was just like a macho thing or something. I don't know. I don't think that he thought it was rape. Because I think most males have an idea that rape is, you know, going out on the streets and picking up some girl and grabbing her in a dark alley and raping her. And they think that, apparently, if a girl would go swimming, you know, skinny dipping with a guy, then she must not have any inhibitions. I don't really know what he thought about it. I know that he knew that I didn't want him to do it.

Bonnie was really comforting. She, in fact, blamed herself for the whole thing. Because she was the one that invited him home. She was the one that had had anything to do with him. And she, well, she didn't discuss calling the police or anything. I think it was evident to both of us that neither one of us could have handled that. Well, I couldn't have handled it just in terms of the state of shock I was in. I couldn't hardly think. I've just read historically, and I've known too, from experiences that I've had with police, that I view the police as a hostile force, as an adversary, you know. And I know what happens to women that report rape. There's very, very little chance of ever getting a rape
conviction. Especially given the circumstances. I think if I had been that woman that was, you know, grabbed off the street, then I probably would have reported it. But, I don't know. Well, I could just, you know. I rehearsed the whole scenario in my head and I could see them saying, you know, "Well, you brought him home. You went skinny dipping with him. You smoked has with him. You didn't scream," you know. At that point, I didn't even know if I would tell my husband. That was one of my first thoughts. You know, because, well, what would his response be? At that time, it would have made it worse to call the police. But, now I think I would feel better about myself if I had. I wish I would have called the police as soon as he left.

I did have a lot of long talks with Bonnie. That was also one of my, one of the reasons that I didn't contact the police was because of Bonnie's position and how it would have affected her. I mean, she was the one that brought him home. And the kids. I just, from the moment that it happened, the thought of talking to the police, you know, about that, was just as alien as anything to me. I just couldn't.

So, I stayed, I stayed for a week. It turned out, I had a ride back from New York. My husband's best friend was there visiting and so we rode back together. He's a really, really good friend of ours. And I told him and he was really upset. And just, you know, wanted to kill the guy and all this, you know. He just was really upset by it and was comforting to me. And it helped.

I'd talked with my husband on the phone a couple of times, but I hadn't said anything because I had decided that I probably wouldn't tell him because I knew that it would just upset him so much. And well, I felt guilty. I felt like I was responsible, at least in part, for what
happened. So, I thought I wouldn't tell him. But I did. I think it was after a day I told him about it. It's been really strange. He didn't say anything. He said, "Explain it to me again." And I told him about it. And he didn't say anything. Nothing at all. He's a very quiet person and he doesn't like to talk about feelings and emotions and things like that. So, I didn't say anything about it further. But, well, within a week it was just like something that had taken over my whole identity. It was like I was possessed with something that I couldn't talk to him about, you know. Really, the only person that I could talk to about it was Doug. And I had told Doug [husband's best friend] about it. And I just felt really bad.

So, I would up calling the mental health center here. And went in and talked to a counselor. And he set up like -- well, it was supposed to be -- it started out the first meeting was Ron [husband] and I and the counselor. And at that first meeting I couldn't bring myself, in front of Ron, to tell him what had happened. We just said we're having marital problems. So, then he started seeing me alone and I told him what had happened. Ron didn't want to go back, but he said he would if I wanted him to. So, I wanted him to so he went back once and stayed for fifteen minutes and said, "No, nothing's wrong. Everything's fine," you know. So, it was bad. I didn't think that Ron believed me at all. I thought that he believed me about the fact that I didn't pick the guy up or anything. But, I think he thought that just something happened between us, you know. Something that I'd willingly done and then later regretted. He just didn't say anything, which really upset me. So, I went to several visits with the psychologist. And, you know, he essentially told me that, "It wasn't your fault. You didn't go to bed with that man. He came into
your room. It was rape. And the only thing that you can do about it now is to leave it behind you and try to forget about it, you know."
And I stopped seeing him.

I've still been really troubled by it for a long time. Well, since it's happened. Just mainly what's troubled me about it is that I thought that Ron didn't believe me, you know. And so when I saw your ad and called -- yeah, I guess that night, I told Ron that I had called. And well, I guess, how did I say it? I said, "There was an ad in the paper wanting to talk to rape victims." And he said, "I don't know anybody that's been raped." I just -- I couldn't. I just, I said, "What?"
And he said, "Well." And I said, "What do you think rape is?" And he said, "Well, I don't want to talk about it." And I was just so upset that I knew if I exploded then it would just blow it. And it would just be a big mess. And so I didn't say anything. And I collected my thoughts and I thought about it for about two days. And then I talked to him about it and I said, "Don't you believe what happened was rape?" And he said, "Well, yeah. I believe you." And then I said, "Well, then why did you say that?" And he said something like, "Oh, well, I just don't want to talk about it. Every time you bring up, or every time I think even about the trip to New York, it just hurts too much. And it really bothers me."
So, we talked about it for a long time and he said that he believed me. But, that it was just really painful for him to even think about it.

Well, it's not the same as it was before. But, I mean I am able to have sex and I still can enjoy it. So, in that sense, I'm really lucky. That's what the traditional rape trauma is, I think. And that's what the psychologists and psychiatrists can deal with. But, as far as
my response, I guess it's just something that I have to just finally put behind me.

It's such a personal thing that it's hard to conceive of — well, it's one thing to tell someone that will be private. Like a psychologist or you. Or anyone -- your family or friends or whatever -- that it will still be a private thing. But, the idea of going to the police and making it public is an entirely different thing. It's something that I don't know if I could ever deal with. Because although it may resolve some of your own feelings, it also, I think, would intensify them. I think with a woman there is always a feeling afterwards that, you know, "Was I dressed seductively?" Did I smile at him in a way that he interpreted as being an invitation?" I used to really like the idea of trying to be a sexy woman. Trying to look sexy and everything. And I was flattered by, you know, comments that men would make or attention that they would pay me. But now, you know, if I'm passing and I hear a man make some remark about me or something, it's really frightening to me. And I do everything that I can not to encourage, encourage that kind of thing. The whole idea of sexuality has changed. It's disgust. I'm angry at the man. I'm not angry at all men.

I'm sure that one of the major reasons that I didn't seriously consider going to the police is that, you know, I've read so much of what happens to women that go to the police. That they are questioned about their sex lives and are just laid open for so much pain. Because ultimately it's your word against his. And a man can always say, "Well, she consented," you know. And it's also such a personal thing that it's just incomprehensible to open it up to, you know.

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I think the first thing that has to be done, and I'm not even sure it can be done, is to change the whole concept of rape. You know, it isn't just something that happens on the streets. It can be a girl and her boyfriend and she says, "No", and, you know. Until society as a whole understands that the concept of rape is the act of intercourse without consent, and accepts that, then I don't think many women are going to be willing to open themselves up to the kind of hassle that comes with contacting the police. It's like going to the police is something entirely foreign to the situation because in a sense, you can't punish the man for what's been done because there is no punishment, you know. What can you do? There's no way you can. So, I just don't know. I don't even know if the concept of the police is an alternative until the whole social consciousness is raised about the issue.
STORY TWO

Well, it was a party for the people that, I was detasseling corn that summer. I was a crew boss. And there was a party for the crew bosses. And my roommate and I went to the party. There were some people there that we didn't know, but had been invited by other people. And, there was a man there that was going to be going to school at the university in town. And I was introduced to him just by a mutual friend. And we just started talking. It was just sort of a typical party that carried on. You know, visiting and drinking.

And then he asked me if I wanted to go get something to eat. So we left the party. And I did tell my roommate, the person I was living with, I was going. And we headed down to an area of town where there's places to eat. One was closed so we decided to just drive around. And he was driving his brother's car or something. And so we went out in the country. And I guess going through my mind the whole time was the fact that we were just going to drive around and talk because I had just met this person. Well, we stopped. And he wanted -- started to kiss me. And I, you know, indicated that I didn't really think that I was prepared to be in a situation like that yet.

And so, it was a van, it was a Volkswagen van. So, he proceeded to pull me down in the back seat. And I immediately started to struggle, which at the time was, you know, the only reaction I had to it. And so
he beat me up. And then he raped me. And I knew — at the time what was going through my head, I really didn't know what to do. I was, I jumped out of the -- as soon as he -- I got back in the seat. And we pulled out. And I was crying and really threatening him. And he said, "Well, get out and look at your face," or something. And I got out of the van and stood in front of the van. And then he said he was going to drive over me, which, at the time, you know, I said, "Go ahead. I don't care," you know. And I was beat, my face was sort of beaten up pretty bad and stuff. And I got back in though, because we were out in the middle of the country -- which, you know, was sort of a crazy thought at the time. I mean, when I look back on it. And I continued to threaten him all the way back to town. But he did drive back to town.

When we got in town though, he didn't know where I lived. And so as soon as we stopped at a stop light, I jumped out and ran home, which was probably a matter of ten blocks or so. And my roommate and her boyfriend were there. And I just came rushing in. And I had blood all over and my clothes were torn. And I rushed into the bathroom and Sherri, my roommate, and Larry, her boyfriend -- Larry went rushing outside because he thought the guy might be outside or something. And she was -- I was really upset and crying. And it was like there was really no decision on what to do really, because Larry came back in and said, "We're calling the police." I mean that was all. And like I didn't question it at all. I mean, I knew I was going to call the police immediately, too.

So, we called the police and they recommended not to clean up or do anything. But, I did change clothes because I just -- I had to because my slacks were ripped and stuff. And so the police came over and took me -- they said, "Go to the hospital immediately."
And the people at the hospital were really great. I mean, the doctor was really good. He was really understanding. Sherri and Larry both went and she was pretty upset about it. And so the doctor examined me and then the police, during that time, had called a man to come down and take pictures. And he was also really good. But, I think this was all a new experience for all these people because it was in a town of about maybe 10,000.

It happened when I was a sophomore in college. It was about four or five years ago. It was really amazing because everyone was -- but, I think they were all really, really upset too. And the photographer was really understanding. I mean, it was really hard. And the doctor asked me if I wanted to stay and I said I didn't. He did give me some pills to help me sleep.

So, after examining me I went on home and went to bed. And then it was about 2:00 and the police came and they said they had found the guy because I had had a description of the car and everything. And they wanted me to come down and not identify him, but they wanted me to go ahead and start filling out all the forms and stuff. And they were really, you know, since I'd already been to bed, they were still really nice, though, for getting me up. So, I did go down then and at the time I was pretty -- still in a matter of shock. But, like again, I was really surprised at how good the men were. At times, I mean, they didn't know how to phrase questions and things like that. Some of the questioning, you know, might not have been necessary. You know, if I'd had sexual relationships with anybody earlier or anything like that.

So, then they took him to jail and stuff. And I ended up taking like a week off from work and I went home. And I mean it was really --
the next couple of days were about the most emotional in my life. Because the next morning trying to call my parents and trying to tell them that I was coming home to discuss something with them. The first couple of times when they answered I started crying. I couldn't, I couldn't talk to them at all. And so my roommate got on and said, "We're coming home. We'll be home in about an hour," 'cause we lived about an hour away.

And we drove home. And that was really, really a bad — it was a bad scene, because it was very, very hard because my face was really black and blue. And for my parents to sit there and try to tell your mother, you know, what had happened and stuff. And so I stayed home one day and went back up to where we were living and just sort of layed low.

And then I decided I was going to try to go back to work. But, it had been put in the paper that someone had been raped in town. And considering how my face looked and stuff, when I went back to work the word had got out, you know. And I couldn't, at the time, I couldn't handle that at all. And see, we had a small group of young high school students — like, you know, we were the crew bosses. And one day one of the little kids, I mean they're really understanding you know — they came up and asked if it was me. And that was the day I quit. Because I couldn't discuss it with them. And I felt it was really a frightening thing to lay on any high school kid, you know.

And so I went home the rest of the summer. And like things weren't, you know — nobody really knew at home. And I didn't discuss it. But it had also been put in the major paper which goes all over the state. And it said the name of the town. And certain people — there were rumors
around, but no one ever came up and confronted me. I did tell a close friend about it, so that she could either squelch it or not, you know.

And so the trial didn't come up until I started back to college again in September. It took -- and during this time I had to go back up to the police and they had to take blood and I had to go out with the police and try to find the significant area where it happened, which was a real hassle because it had happened in the next county. And, they were fairly understanding, but it was, you know. It was really time consuming. And, you know, trying to explain to them where it happened. And trying to visualize where there were lights that night and stuff. And then I was going to college so I had to go tell my professors, you know, why I was going to take a week and a half off from school. And that was sort of hard because male professors I didn't know how to explain it to them. I had one woman professor in a creative writing course and that was really good. I could explain it to her and stuff.

And so the trial was a real dilly. I mean it was, you know, it was just atrocious. I mean like, we took the lawyer that was in the local town. My father wanted to get his lawyer, but we thought we'd just take the guy there, you know. It seemed like a real open and shut case type of thing. And the guy had confessed that night and said, yeah, he had done it and everything. And so during the time between when he had been picked up and the trial, they sent him to the mental institution in the state and had him tested. And he had come out all right. Well, during this time of the confession and the trial, his mother and her boyfriend had come up and convinced him to fight it. And so they got a lawyer, also. And so, thus, began the trial and whole hassle. I mean, in a town of that size there's only one place you can eat during a recess of the trial, you know.
Like my lawyer recommended that I lengthen my skirts which, you know, really perturbed me. I dug up a, you know, the dress I wore to the homecoming when I was in high school. You know, 'cause I didn't have like hardly any dresses or skirts or anything, you know. And then also began—he said, "Well, did you have any sexual relationships when you were in high school?" And I said, "No. I went with one guy all through high school," who was then in the Navy in Spain. You know, I mean, but I had partied a lot. Then his lawyer came down to where I went to school and went to the school and was trying to find people to find things about my character, which was a real, a real dilly.

And my father had real guilt feelings because he had allowed me to do what I wanted in high school. If I wanted to go to a party or when I was a senior in high school, I was in with a group of friends—we would occasionally take off for a week-end. Like go to the city or go to the, a, lake or something with mixed company. And so my parents were experiencing extreme guilt. I think that it relates to the fact that they had allowed me to go to parties, like maybe up at the university. And I would meet men that I hadn't even known before and spend, you know, an evening of drinking with them or something. And I think they related it all back to if I wouldn't have gone to this party, you know.

You know, and anyway, the guy got off. Because first they were trying to get him with assault. But, they were also trying to get him for rape. But, the charges in that state are like ten years. And the jury was just really upset. They couldn't imagine putting away——this guy was like a senior. He had just graduated from high school. He had had problems all through high school and he had been living with his
football coach. And he was a football player coming to our university on a scholarship. And like it was his big chance.

Another thing is, I wish now that we would have gone for a mistrial. They didn't want to bring this in. He had already spent time in a juvenile home for beating people up. And so he had a record. But, if you bring past offenses in it's possible that his attorney could have called for a mistrial. I would have liked a mistrial even if I had to drop out of school. But, I mean the jury, I can't believe -- I mean, like the people were upset and everything, but they couldn't imagine putting this kid away. And I didn't want to put him away. I just wanted to give him help. If they didn't find anything wrong with him here, send him someplace else. But the guy needs help, you know.

You know, they brought this girlfriend in who was, you know, the nice little cheerleader. And, of course, I've always been resentful of cheerleaders because I was always playing sports. And they were trying to push the fact that people at the party were trying to get him drunk. Because he was a football player and they thought it would be funny to do that.

They didn't charge him with anything. You know, they could have gone for assault, but instead we elected to go for assault and rape -- go for the main rape. And so it was, it was like everything else. I felt like they didn't believe me, you know. It's like when I was on the stand, you know, I started to cry when I, you know -- you're sitting there and you're having to tell the whole story over again. You're looking at your mother who's, you know, has always loved you and believed that you're a nice girl. And I'm still a nice girl, that's with the
quote unquote nice. And you know, I started to cry and his lawyer was real pushy, you know. He said, "Why are you crying now?" You know, he said, "You didn't cry before during your other testimonies." He said, "What are you doing now?" And so it was a typical example of a real badgering attorney, I mean just really. And also getting on me about, you know, if I'd been going with anybody and, of course, they asked if I'd had sexual relationships before, which I hadn't.

I can't remember how old I was, but a lot of the people at the party were under -- at that time you had to be 21 to drink in that state. Well, I was under 21. And almost everybody at the party was, and that was pushed. You know, had I drank often? And did I make it a point of breaking the law? And, you know, the drinking thing. They said, "You knew there was going to be drinking going on." Yes, I did. And the fact that I went to a party unescorted, you know -- that was, it was just mentioned. You know, I didn't go with anyone to the party. And I had not met this person before and why would I in the world, go out in a car in the middle of the country with someone I didn't know? And I think that was the biggest point. You know, that I allowed him to drive out in the country. I mean, I allowed that to happen. You know, and I allowed him to stop the car. And, you know, and it was really hard I think for a lot of the people to believe that you do go out in the country and visit. And also you may make out a little bit, but you don't always get raped. And that was the deciding point. You know, I think a lot of these people even though, I mean I hate to say, I think juries are the same every place. But, they were trying to evaluate whether I had brought this on myself by allowing these things to come about. This is all personal opinion.
I think that, you know, girls that put themselves in that position are also putting themselves in a position for something to happen. And especially with drinking. They really pushed that. They pushed the fact that he had drank a lot.

They really tried to build up his image, also. That this was his first break in life. That he had had a hard time. His mother was separated. He had lived with his football coach. He had had some trouble, but had straightened out, you know. And this scholarship and his coming to town was his first big chance to really do something for himself. And that getting charged with this would just ruin him again, you know, ruin him for life. The fact that I was, you know -- the psychological damage it had done to me was not brought out.

Sometimes, you know, I think about -- yeah, I think I do feel guilty. And I always did think, "Well, maybe that was my fault," you know. But, you see, then I reevaluate that. I don't allow myself to go into that because I think, you know, any normal human being when you say stop should stop. But, I always worry that, you know, yeah, I shouldn't have gone out in the country with this guy. It was my fault. I shouldn't have agreed to go out there. You're allowing yourself to be classified as that type of woman that's going out to have intercourse immediately.

Especially since I'm taller I always felt, had a real great belief in my ability to fight anyone off. You know, goofing around with guys I'd maybe been going out with, just strength wise and stuff. I always, I'd never thought about rape very much, but I felt that I could beat someone off. And this really damaged my opinion of myself as far as what I could do in a crisis situation. Because that first hit, you know. I couldn't believe it. I mean, I'd never been hit before in my life.
God, I mean a couple of hits and you're just, you know. I mean, sure, I'm still struggling, you know. But, God, it's unbelievable.

I was scared 'cause I was talking the whole time. That's another thing, you know, as I've learned, you're supposed to try to talk to them. I was begging this guy, you know. I mean, I told him I had all kinds of friends that would go out with him and you, you know, go to bed with him immediately. I said, "I know a lot of people," you know. And then I started to, when I bit him that's when he hit me. On the mouth. I bit really, really hard. And then I had, I started clawing, too. And I started beating him. That was another thing that killed me. If we could have had the trial immediately afterwards, like my hands were all black and blue from hitting him. And my face was really bad and he had scratches and stuff and it would have been evident that I struggled a lot, you know. They pushed the thing that they wanted to know if I screamed. See, well, there was like a farm house. I'd seen a light, you know. And they kept wanting, the lawyer pushed that, too. And I thought I had, but I think I did in my mind. I really don't think I did out loud. But, it's like one of those things I really am not sure if I did.

It was really bad, too, because then I was going -- I went, like this was a junior college where I'd been going. And then I heard that he went back to town that night and was bragging how he got off, which really bothered me. Really bothered me.

That Sunday night that I went home and told my folks they immediately called my sister and brother-in-law. And they came up that night. They lived about, oh, 200 miles away. And my parents felt -- my brother-in-law is a really close, understanding person, also. So they felt it was time to bring everybody in, which was a good thing because we just
sort of sat around. Well, I guess I was practically thinking, you know, that if I'm going through with this I have to let my parents know. And I guess in any type of crisis, I immediately turn to my parents. But, well, it was just like I couldn't talk to them about it. I mean, I figured they, I told them initially what happened and I figured they could hear what went on during the trial. But, as soon as I walked out of the trial I didn't want to know what was happening. I didn't want to be associated with that. When I'd go home in the evening, I tried to put it completely out of my head. Especially with my mother. I felt that I had to try not to be so psychologically affected by it. I mean, because I was. You know. And I didn't want her to know just how screwed up I was about it. You know, because I knew that she wouldn't know what to do.

But, it was like a long time, it seemed like to me, before I finally could talk to people about it. And even now, there are some people I don't mention it to at all. With some, like with women -- men -- well with both. I don't know. It really frightens them. Women, it frightens them. And also, I'm afraid it will change their opinion toward me. They'll worry that they will offend me in some way. Like with men. Sometimes, I would really like very much to tell men because men enjoy joking about rape.

It's just something you don't want everybody to know. Well, I think because of the psychological implications. I mean, men that I am close to at home, I didn't want them to know it because I just know, or I had a feeling, that it would change their feelings towards me. They would just worry about how I would react to them. And women. Some women just have no idea, you know, anything about rape.
I think I came across as very meek. Very, very, just, you know, quiet. You know, shallow almost. I just said what they asked me and then I started crying on the stand. It's really hard. I, you know -- because maybe I wasn't meek. I thought I was. I don't know how I came across. I think I came across as the kind of woman that goes to parties and drinks. You know, what I was doing that summer was not exactly, you know. Working in the corn field. Women that do that were, you know, a little --

Well, I really didn't know what had happened, you know. Like I was really bleeding a lot and I had no idea what had happened. And I just mean, God, blood! You call the police. And, of course, I didn't know my face was that bad until I looked in the mirror and when I looked in the mirror -- I mean. And, also, the fact that Larry and Sherri were there and they saw me and I reflected how bad I really looked. And there was no question. I think they, Larry, really pushed it too. Like they were on the phone immediately. I felt like there was nothing else. I mean it was either call the police or I'd go out and shoot him. I mean, I thought, "God. There's no question. I've been wronged completely. The police must know about it. I mean this guy beat me up and raped me."

There was no other question. Also because of my upbringing and the area I was raised in. People don't do that. That doesn't happen. Because I mean -- rapes. Who gets raped? Someone does this to you, you do something about it, you know. And the doing is legal.

But like, that's another thing, you know. When I meet men now, I really, really try hard not to worry about the way I talk or something. But, I know for many years after that, until this latest guy I've been going out with, like if I met somebody in a bar, or if I started talking with someone, I often would, or the second or third statement would be,
"I'm not going home to go to bed with you." But, I felt like I had to, you know, let that be known.

People feel uncomfortable. They don't know how to say, "How do you feel?" I don't know how to say, "Hey, ask me how I feel," you know. I mean, sex is still something we don't talk about very much. And to even get to the point where you discuss sex with another woman -- a lot of women won't even sit down and talk about sex. I don't know a lot of women that are open about their sexual feeling or -- and then to move it into rape, you know, which is a violent sexual act. It's something that also frightens women. I mean, even women that are married or have been with men for awhile. I think sometimes, you know, they have in the back of their mind -- I mean, if they have a woman sitting right across from them that tells them that you can be overcome by any man because psychologically we don't think we're strong enough -- it's going to scare her a little bit. And she's going to wonder about that one night. And it's a frightening subject, too. Because it's happening so much and people aren't aware of it. And when they finally find out that they have a friend, you know, that brings it home. And they're scared. Women are really, women get frightened about it. Frightened living alone, thus, their independence is threatened. Maybe you want to go to a bar and have a drink, but you have to be frightened because there may be some crazy guy that's going to follow you out of the parking lot. And so there, I think, the fright factor is a real big thing. But, also, it's something that some women and some men don't like to get into an emotional discussion. You know, true emotions aren't always wanted. They want the superficial.
STORY THREE

It was four or five years ago. I was 19 and just out of the house, kind of wild and slightly loose. I had hitchhiked from San Francisco where I was living, to Oakland to visit. I had a cousin that was staying there from the South, from Georgia. And so I hitchhiked down to see her and I spent the week-end there. And, I had to get back by Monday and this was a Sunday night. And we just got lost talking and talking and talking. And so it was like 10:00 at night before I started out. And so I was hitchhiking through downtown Oakland and these two kids, two Black kids, in a, oh, it was an old clunky car. They picked me up and they said they were going to San Francisco. It sort of sounded wierd to me. And I knew better. I knew better. But, I got in and a -- then, let's see. They just took me out, a little bit out of Oakland. And they started giving me shit about putting them on a boat, and making them slaves, and you know. Beating them with a whip and like it was my fault that they had been oppressed for hundreds of years. And, you know, I'd never even known a Black person in my life, you know. I lived in the White suburbs and I didn't know what I was -- you know, I didn't even know what in the world was happening.

And this went on for an hour and I just discussed it and discussed it. And then, finally, they put a switch blade to my temple and said, "Spread your legs honey." And a, that's what happened.
So, after that they told me that I wasn't that bad after all, you know. That I'm probably different. And they took me back. They let me off in the middle of the ghetto. You know, it was like one or two in the morning after that. And I was trailed by, you know, it must have been 12 or 15 of these Black guys. You know, they're hollering names at me. Their friends, you know. And, Oh God! It was the most nightmarish night of my life, you know.

And I finally took salvation in this little dive place. This big, huge, fat Black man. I didn't know he was Black at first. But, it was in the shadows. I talked him into letting me sleep -- it was like a cafe-store. You know, they were selling chitlins and beer, you know. And he let me sleep in the front, in the front room all night. In fact, he even offered me fifty dollars. And I just said, I said no. And he said, "Oh, all right. Just stay here." And he was drinking gin, you know. Just ewh (sic). But, he let me sleep there until dawn. And, you know, boy. I just told him I was in trouble. I just said that I needed a place to stay.

The next day I just went home. It turned out my Dad found out that I was -- you know, like he'd gone to Oakland the next day. I didn't even know this. And he called my cousin and asked where I was. And she said, "Oh, she went home last night." And he said, "Well, she didn't get there." And so Dad asked me what happened and I ended up telling him. And he just said, "Well, that's what you get kid." You know, because he knew I'd been hitchhiking for awhile and he was worried. But, he was just, he didn't want me doing it anymore.

Well, the situation was so shady in the first place. For me to be hitchhiking in downtown Oakland in the middle of the night was crazy.
You know, and to get in that car when the vibes were bad, that was crazy. I, I just felt like it was my own Karma, you know. That I was reaping what I'd sown. I just felt like, you know, that it was teaching me a lesson that I needed to know. You know, because in order to hitchhike you have to be responsible for yourself. And to, to have some sort of outlet. And you have to keep control. You just can't be doing things like that. And you know, I just -- I viewed it more as a lesson than anything else. And, besides, I thought the police would just laugh me out of there for the situation, you know. For hitchhiking like that. I just didn't think they'd take it very seriously. I was thinking of things, of women who get raped are asking for it, you know. Women that hitchhike are asking for it. I felt in the situation I'd been asking for it, more or less. I just wasn't in a controlled enough situation to have an outlet. It was just a silly thing to be doing. I mean, I wasn't specifically asking for rape. And that I didn't really have any room to gripe. Or that's what I felt. During the rape I just felt terrified. You know, I definitely didn't want to do it, but, you know, out there I, I, there wasn't any outlet, really.

Oh, I'd already done my struggling. I quit doing it then. I just said, "Oh, well, it's here." You know, I didn't feel like I had, you know, I didn't feel like I could get away without it -- without giving in to what they wanted. I didn't feel like I could physically fight them. No, there was these two guys and they weren't that big, but still I didn't feel physically capable of; and a switch blade talks. I mean, I don't think they were all that bad, you know. The situation was kind of handed in their lap. I don't think that they would have gone looking for someone to rape. They were really nice except for the switch blade thing. And
for getting to me for something I'd never done, you know. They were basically all right. They even offered me a place to stay for the night.

I guess I was basically just ashamed for my lack of control of myself. I just, I didn't want to deal with the situation in public, you know. I didn't want to tell other people what I'd done and what had happened as a result. I, I really, I took it completely personally. You know, I did. Because, I just thought it was ridiculous for me to have been hitchhiking like that, you know. To have gotten in a car where I had bad vibes. 'Cause I know better than that. You know, and after that I was really careful about which cars I got into. You know, I'd check things out before I got in.

That night I was just kind of desperate for a ride mainly. You know, it was late at night and I just didn't want to have to deal with it anymore than I had to. And, you know, I wanted a ride. I thought they were going to San Francisco. It wasn't that kind of thing. I just wanted a ride. It was something I did.

Mainly, I, I look on it as a lesson. Also, I said before, it seemed to me a bit of Karma. You know, you reap what you sow. And you know, I'd been into this hitchhiking thing pretty mindlessly. I hadn't really given thought to it. And I think I was just, you know -- I needed to learn it. And unfortunately, I had to learn it the hard way. You see, I got, I got the clap. It's just one big lesson. That's how I basically, and I can write it off as far as the emotional trauma goes now, I can just write it off. You know, I'm bothered that that kind of things exists, that people have to do that to each other. And I'm bothered that I was dumb. Well, I just wrote it off as, you know, as a big lesson. As Karma. As you know, something that I needed to go through.
I told a few friends and my mother found out about it, too. I didn't tell her of my own accord, but, she found out. She was really upset. Well, she found out that I had the clap. She saw the band-aids on my butt when I was taking a shower. And I didn't know exactly -- I'm not a liar. And she was just, well, I don't know exactly how she took it. She just said, "Well, I'm glad you took care of it, Jean. And it's too bad it had to happen to you." And she never tried to stop me from hitchhiking though. She just told me to keep control of it. Because I guess, just, she didn't want to take responsibility for my mobility. So, she just told me to take care of myself and to keep my eyes open and not be dumb.

I didn't know. This almost sounds corny. I sort of feel -- I think the lesson itself was necessary. They could have just cut me up and left me there. I think the lesson was necessary for what I was doing. And you know, I, in a way, I mean, I can't say I'm glad it happened. I do feel like it, it had to. Sooner or later, you know. For better or worse.

The first thing I thought was, "Oh, my God. What an idiot. Where am I?" I was mad at myself and at the social situation that caused it. I knew right away when they started that route. Boy, that's so crazy. It's another world. You live in the suburbs and then suddenly this just gets thrown in your face.

Going to the police -- it's a lot to put up with. And, you know, saying, "Look what happened to me." And my parents. It just would have been a lot to put up with, pressing a charge. You know, I knew what it was like. You know, police are still sort of ominous to me. The power thing.
But if somebody had just grabbed me off the street -- boy, I tell you. You know, that's a different thing. That would have made me mad. That's crazy. You can't let things like that happen. Shit. But here, I definitely feel responsible.

And to go to the police with this. I just feel like I would have been grilled about my sexuality. About the situation. About hitchhiking. "How much have you hitchhiked? Do you do this all the time? Don't you know that this happens to girls that hitchhike?" And also they would have said something about the way I was dressed, which wasn't quite, you know, matronly. I had on this shirt, but it was fairly see through. And I just think those guys thought of me as a scapegoat that happened to be a woman. You know, if I was a guy I could very well have been beaten up or something.

My Dad asked me if I wanted to do anything about it, but he didn't -- I don't think he really wanted that much to do with it. He asked me if I'd talked to the police and then he asked me, I think he asked me if I was going to or if I would. And I just said no. But, he was going through a lot of -- I think normally, he would have really gotten up in arms about it, but he was going through some weird stuff though. I don't think he really wanted to deal with this. And you know, if I'd been at home, he really would have gone head over heels, if he was still responsible for me. Or if my Mom was. But, you know, since I was on my own he didn't really -- if I'd been pressured, I probably would have gone. But, or if I had someone to back me up while I was doing it. If he was there to help me through it, you know. 'Cause I wouldn't want to do that alone. At that point, I would have been alone. But, if my Dad had, you know -- he would have helped me.
I did a lot of discussing about it with my sister. Quite a bit. You know, she couldn't really understand. She's younger and more naive. And she couldn't really understand. But, I was able to talk about it. And she helped me when I got the clap. She was, you know, my closest confident at the time. And I just needed to — she seemed to, you know. Like she's sort of practical, too. She seemed to go along with how I felt about it. I don't know if, she probably would have done some hollering. I'm not sure — if it happened to her. But, she could understand more than any one else probably, how I — why I had to rationalize it the way I did. You know, I did some crying.

I probably said it before, but I just — I don't think I really could have dealt with the situation at all if I didn't rationalize it as I did, you know. But I still, you know. It fits in with the way I feel. I had to rationalize the whole thing like that or I would have gone bananas. I couldn't have coped with it otherwise.