

# Rape - All American Crime

MPED- women's workshop

"There are sick, evil men lurking in the bushes and violently, sexually attacking innocent 'nice girls.' There are helpless good guys who are driven to sexual violence by immoral women who lead men on through their suggestive behavior. Rape is an abhorrent crime which everyone is against and society tries (although it is difficult) to curtail. All of these statements sum up the current myths about rape. They are, in fact, myths we have been forced to believe to avoid uncovering the reality of rapists, female behavior, and society's efforts."—From Stop Rape.

In Madison, in 1971, thirty-four rapes were reported, but criminologists estimate that at least ten times as many are committed as are reported. This means that in this city alone, over 340 rapes occurred last year. If this isn't bad enough, in the first nine months of 1972 forty-six rapes have been reported, which means there have been at least 460. Let's stop and examine what in our society perpetuates rape, why so many occur, why rape is so underreported, and what the courts are doing in relation to the victim and in relation to the offender.

Rape is justified by the ideology of sexism which is inherent in the capitalist system. There is a correlation between capitalism and the oppression of women. Women are oppressed in two ways: economically and psychologically. Economically women are exploited by lower wages for equal work, discrimination in hiring, and no provisions for childcare. Capitalists feel they can justify this because they view women's role in production as being a reserve army of labor. The woman in the home is totally exploited economically for she performs labor for which she receives no pay at all. The economic and psychological manifestations of women's oppression under capitalism cannot be separated; they reinforce each other.

WOMEN ARE made to feel psychologically inferior, and this feeling of inferiority is supported and verified by the economic facts of less pay and less important jobs than those of men. Capitalism is a system based on competition and on the necessity of exploitation. This attitude is perpetuated through the media—television, movies, books, magazines, etc. Women's bodies are used to sell anything from cars to lipstick to shaving cream. Rape must be viewed as yet another manifestation within this sphere of women's oppression.

Rape is seen as arising from the male's overwhelming sexual and aggressive needs. The woman is supposedly encouraging the man; she is taught to be passive and defenseless, yet she is also taught her only value is that of a sexual object, her means of survival and "success." Sociologists interpret women's actions as being directly responsive to male needs and justifying what they get—raped.

The common myths that rape arises from the provocation of the female, that it is due to rapists being sex starved maniacs, or that it is primarily black men who go after white women are proven to be false in Menachem Amir's recent book, *Patterns in Forcible Rape*. No contemporary study suggests that rapists are mad men nor are they oversexed or impotent. Amir found that in two-thirds of rape cases studied there was no alcohol present, in one-third of the cases the victim and the offender had known one and other prior to the rape; three quarters of the rapes had been planned—particularly the multiple or gang rapes. Most rapes were committed indoors—one third of them in the

victims' homes; the legendary dark alley rape was rare. Most rapes were committed on weekends, especially between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. Eighty-two per cent of the rape victims did not have "bad reputations." Some degree of violence was used in 85 per cent of the cases; and in only 3 per cent of the rape cases were black men reported to have raped white women.

WHEN A woman reports a rape the standard police and hospital response is unbelieving, unsympathetic, or generally hostile. There is the automatic shame that is thrust upon the victim by the police and society to make the victim feel that somehow she encouraged the crime. There is the obvious double bind that the police put women in when they tell them not to fight or resist in a rape situation, in order to protect themselves from further injury, and then at the station tell the victims that if they don't show obvious signs of violent assault, they do not have grounds for prosecution. Rape laws are designed to protect males against the charge of rape; in a trial situation it is the woman's

character and morals which are in question, not the actual crime.

The Women's Liberation Work Group of MPED is trying to deal with the situation in concrete ways. Women should do the utmost to avoid rape situations by: avoid going out alone at night, being sure, if it is necessary to hitch, to hitch-hike with others (women drivers pick up women hitchhikers), always sit near a door in the car, keep the windows partially open and the door unlocked in cars so you can scream or jump out, and by joining and working together to develop street-sheets with information regarding descriptions of cars, and men who have hassled women. All of the things we have just outlined have the purpose of intimidation of men and prevention of further rapes, instead of a prison term that can produce only more hostile rapists than they were prior to conviction.

As an organization we urge all women to attend the Rape Seminars we will be holding on Wednesday, November 15 in LHA in Cole Basement at 7:30 p.m. and SSO in Witte Lounge on Thursday, November 16 at 7:30 p.m.

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## Wisconsin Student Association

WSA

511 Memorial Union  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706  
(608) 262-1081

14 November 1972

To: Candidates for W S A Senate

The by-laws under which the Senate is composed provide for two representatives from each of 17 districts. Freshmen and sophomore students elect representatives on a regional basis:

- District I Lakeshore Halls
- District II Chadbourne and Elizabeth Waters Halls
- District III Southeast Halls
- District IV South of State Street, including Langdon
- District V North of State Street, including Mifflin
- District VI All other areas

Upperclassmen elect representatives according to the major divisions:

- District VII Engineering
- District VIII Physical Sciences
- District IX History and Political Science
- District X Business and Law
- District XI English, Speech, and Journalism
- District XII Languages, Art, and Music
- District XIII Education and Library Science
- District XIV Social Sciences
- District XV Psychology, Earth Science and Philosophy
- District XVI Medical Sciences
- District XVII Natural Sciences

During each election one representative is elected for a term of two semesters. Should vacancies occur in any district, the Senate will meet and declare those positions vacant and inform the Elections Commission.

KMB:gerb

Kyle E. Brown  
Elections Commissioner