

Sex Offenders A Primer

David Lisak, Ph.D.

Rape



Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Myths about Offenders



Stranger
Rapist



Racist
Stereotypes



"The Nice
Guy"

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Myths about Campus Rapists



- He was drunk (and so was she)
- There was miscommunication
- It was an accident of circumstance
- He would never do it again
- He's basically "a nice guy"

Miscommunication vs. Intention

Research on Sexual Cues

- Men and women use similar cues and understand acceptance and rejection cues¹
- Women say "no" to sexual activity using the same methods that people use to say "no" in other contexts²
- Young men understand sexual refusal cues³

¹ Knowledge, J. Community & Applied Soc. Psychol., 18,168.
² Ketzinger & Frith, (1999). Just Say No? The Use of Conversation Analysis in Developing a Feminist Perspective on Sexual Refusal, 10 Discourse & Society, 10, 293
³ McCaw & Senn, (1998). Perception of Cues in Conflictual Dating Situations, Violence Against Women, 4, 609.

Reality:

Most rapes are non-stranger attacks



Copyright 2005 David Lisak

The Reality about Victimization Rates

- 1. How victimization is measured
- 2. Victimization rates have been remarkably consistent for more than 30 years

Rape Victimization Rates

- 1987: Koss et al.: 15% of college women raped since age 14
- 1992: Rape in America study: 13% of women raped during lifetime
- 2000: NIJ/CDC: 14.8% of US women raped during lifetime
- 2007: DOJ Campus Study: 12% of women raped since entering college
- 2015: AAU Climate Survey: 11% of college women raped since entering university

Mythology

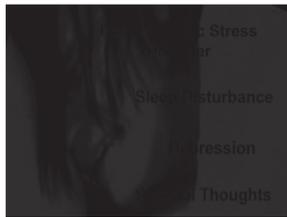


Non-stranger victims are less harmed than victims of stranger rape

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Reality

Research on rape impact is **BASED** on studies of non-stranger victims



The Reality about Offenders

1. There is no "profile" of a sex offender
2. Most offenders are serial offenders
3. The vast majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by serial offenders
4. Serial offenders are typically predatory: they identify, manipulate and exploit vulnerabilities

No Profile of a Sex Offender

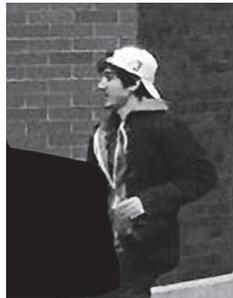


No Profile of a Sex Offender



Copyright 2005 David Lisak

No Profile of a Sex Offender



Copyright 2005 David Lisak

No Profile of a Sex Offender

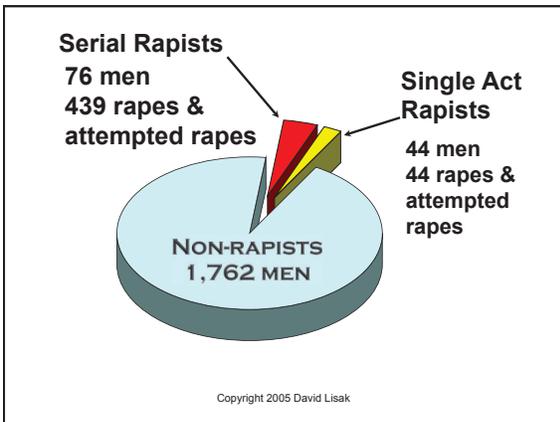


Key Fact

Most rapists are serial offenders.

Copyright 2005 David Lisak





Violence Committed by Serial Rapists

The 76 Serial Rapists Committed:

- 49 sexual assaults**
- 439 rapes & attempted rapes**
- 66 acts physical abuse of children**
- 277 acts sexual abuse of children**
- 214 acts of battery**

Total: 1,045 offenses

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Serial Rape by Undetected Rapists: 2009 U.S. Navy Study

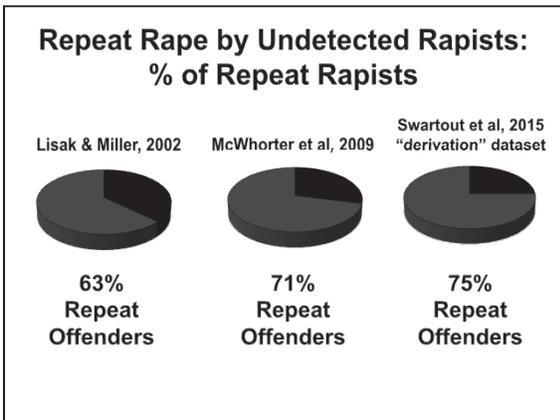
- 1,146 men assessed: 13% rapists**
- 71% of rapists were serial offenders**
- Serial offenders averaged 6 rapes**

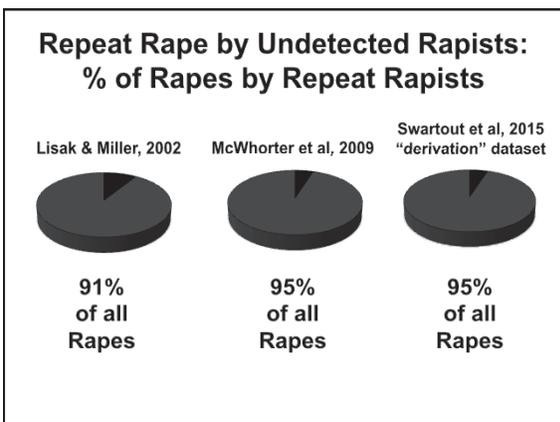
McWhorter, S.K., Stander, V.A., Merrill, L.L., Thomsen, C.J., & Milner, J.S. (2009). Reports of rape
repertration by newly enlisted male navy personnel. 204-218.
Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Predicting Sexual Violence 2009 U.S. Navy Study

**Men who had committed a rape prior
to entering the Navy were 10 times
more likely to commit a rape during
their 1st year in the service than men
who had never before raped.**

McWhorter, S.K., Stander, V.A., Merrill, L.L., Thomsen, C.J., & Milner, J.S. (2009). Reports of rape
repertration by newly enlisted male navy personnel. 204-218.
Copyright 2005 David Lisak





Rapists Plan their Assaults

Assaults are not "accidents"
Not caused by "circumstances"
Rapists look for vulnerability and then exploit it

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Typical Sequence of Attack

1. Identify vulnerability (intoxication, instability, alone)
2. Increase vulnerability (level of intoxication)
3. Isolate

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

This is a reenactment of an interview conducted by Dr. David Lisak, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Massachusetts, Boston, as part of a study of men who had raped but were never reported or prosecuted for their crimes.

The "Frank" Tape

1. Stalking vulnerability: "Scouting for targets..."; whom does he target?
2. Grooming: "Real honor..."; "Psych'ed up...";
3. Increase vulnerability: "Home brew..."; "Real woozy, so...";
4. Isolation: The designated room;
5. Cognitive distortions: "1,000 times before..."; "Pissed me off..."; "She was plastered, maybe that's why..."

The Role of Alcohol

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Alcohol & Sexual Assault Vectors of Risk

1. Perpetrators prowl for victims where alcohol is being consumed
2. Intoxication → diminished capacity to discern risk
3. Intoxication → diminished capacity to physically resist
4. Intoxication → unconsciousness

Copyright 2005 David Lisak

Alcohol as a Weapon

- International study: 38 sites; 7,921 college students
- Assessed binge drinking, antisocial traits and partner violence
- Antisocial traits fully mediated the link between binge drinking and violence

Hines, D.A. & Straus, M.A. (2007). Binge drinking & violence against dating partners: The mediating effect of antisocial traits & behaviors in a multinational perspective. *Aggressive Behavior*, 33, 441-457.
