

DATE / ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: FACTS AND TIPS

By Susan Bartelstone
Personal Safety and Crime Prevention Specialist

The majority of rapes (estimates are as high as 73%) are perpetrated by someone known to the victim!



38% of perpetrators were a friend or acquaintance of the victim, 28% were an intimate acquaintance of the victim and 7% were another relative.

*(From
www.rainn.org)*

Date/acquaintance rape is the most prevalent serious violent crime committed on college campuses.



20-25% of women are victims of rape or attempted rape over their four years of college.



Date/acquaintance rape is defined as forced or coerced sex between dates, relationship partners, friends, friends of friends or acquaintances like bosses, coworkers or the guy that delivers your packages. Coercion can be physical, verbal and/or emotional.

Emotional coercion tactics that date and acquaintance rapists use include: threats to ruin your reputation; threats to "not like you"; name calling; saying you "brought it on" or "really want it"; threats to break up; threats to say you "did it" even if you didn't; or "you've had sex with other men so what's the big deal?"

While your boss or the man who delivers your groceries isn't the same kind of acquaintance as a boyfriend or a casual date, the following statistics and facts apply to both categories:

FACTS (from about.com/date rape):

- The majority of rapes involve females between the ages of 12-24; 25% of girls will fall victim to rape by age 24; 3 out of 5 rapes occur by age 18.
- Date/acquaintance rape is not "boys will be boys" or "boys behaving badly" and it's not about sex. Like stranger-stranger rape, it's about power, aggression, hostility, degradation and pain.
- Date/acquaintance rape is a severe betrayal of trust, leaves long-lasting emotional injuries...and is a serious crime.
- People of all races, ethnicity and socio-economic classes are victimized.
- 42% of the victims never told anyone about their assaults or sought help.



You don't need to be overly paranoid. Simply use common sense and remain alert.



If you don't know how to fight, take a self defense or rape prevention course.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY INCREASES PERSONAL SAFETY!

DATE/ACQUAINTANCE RAPE SAFETY SUGGESTIONS:

- **Screen your dates.** Know who you're going out with. Check out a first date or blind date with friends. Take your own car or carry money for a taxi and bring a fully charged cell phone with you. Go to public places like a movie, sporting event, or restaurant until you feel ready to move to the next stage in the relationship. Don't leave a party, concert, game, or other social occasion with someone you just met or don't know well.
- **Set boundaries.** Communicate your feelings about sex and the way you want to be treated in general clearly to a date—or boyfriend—if you feel pressured. Men often claim to have misunderstood a woman's words and actions (the old "she said no, but she really meant yes" excuse). If you're feeling nervous or uneasy, end the date and get out of there as soon as you can. This also means don't permit abusive or demeaning language or gestures or physical violence in a dating or long-term relationship.
- **Trust your instincts.** If you get danger signals from someone you know—well or casually—view them the same way you'd view a stranger who causes that feeling and take the same precautions.
- **Watch the liquor.** Be cautious about drinking (or drugging) on a date or at a party. Alcohol and drugs affect your judgment, inhibit your instinctive warning system to impending danger and may critically decrease your ability to defend yourself. Statistics show that most date rapes involve their use. **Personal responsibility increases personal safety.**
- **Stay alert.** Be watchful for the so-called date rape drugs (like "Roofies" (Rohypnol) or Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB)) at social functions. They are odorless and flavorless sedatives which can be easily mixed into a drink or punchbowl. Only a few small sips cause unconsciousness. Get your own drinks at parties (even when with people you know). Don't drink from an open can, a poured glass, a punch bowl, pitcher or tub. Don't leave a drink or can unattended or out of your sight. In bars or clubs, get your drinks directly from the bartender and try not to take your eyes off your glass for too long.
- **Leave immediately.** Keep your eyes and ears open. If there's talk of date rape drugs or if people seem excessively high even though they've had only a little to drink, leave the party or club immediately and don't go back!
- **Be prepared.** Nothing, including buying someone dinner or a gift, "entitles" a man to sex—even if you've previously had sex with the person. If you don't want to have sex, say so loudly and forcefully. Be prepared (by practicing beforehand) to get rude, yell, attract attention...or even fight someone off if necessary.
- **Stop a stalker.** If you're being stalked or harassed by someone you know or had a prior relationship with, get counseling from a campus or women's organization about Orders of Protection and other options you might have.

The Bottom Line: No Means No!