

# Interview:

## Gillean Chase of the Rape Crisis Centre



Rape needs to be defined as an act of aggression...lack of choice makes it a violent act.

By Paul Kellogg

I bet you thought you knew what rape was? It's a sex crime, right? A crime of passion.

Wrong. According to Gillean Chase, public educator of the Rape Crisis Centre, it's more accurate to describe rape as a form of assault, an act of violence.

In the course of the following interview, Chase discusses other common conceptions about rape, and shows that at least some of them are misconceptions.

For instance, according to Chase, more women have been able to prevent a rape from occurring by physically resisting, by knowing and applying self-defence, than by not resisting in order not to provoke the rapists' anger.

The Rape Crisis Centre is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to answer phone calls from women in crisis who need someone to talk to about rape. The Centre presently has four full-time employees, and a staff of over 40 unpaid volunteers.

The volunteer staffers go through an intensive training program before they take up position on the receiving end of the phone calls, to prepare them for the types of problems and crises they will have to face.

Because of the present and growing crunch in social service financing, the Centre is experiencing a financial crisis. Needing \$60,000 for a year's functioning, they have so far managed to collect less than \$20,000.

Anyone seeking further information or wanting to make a donation, can contact the Centre at their business number, 368-5695. Donations are tax deductible.

**EXCALIBUR -- What is rape? People seem to have two different definitions of it. It's treated officially as an act of passion, or a sexual crime, while many people are beginning to think that it is more valid to classify it as an act of violence, as a form of assault. Which do you think is more accurate?**

**CHASE --** I think rape needs to be defined as an act of aggression. It uses the genitals as a form of humiliation. The whole area of rape, of course, is one of non-consent, and in non-consent, the lack of choice makes it a violent act, against the individual's space and so on. Whereas, under the law, rape is defined completely differently and it's not broad enough to cover all the instances of rape which do occur.

Under the law, rape is intercourse without consent, involving the penis and involving penetration of the vagina. That's its basic definition, so all kinds of rape other than that - for instance insertion of foreign objects in the vagina, or anal or oral forms of intercourse - would get classified under a category called indecent assault.

Within that category, the sen-

tencing is totally different. It's a so-called "lesser" offense, no matter what it does to the woman's psyche, no matter how much more painful it might be. So that, under the law, the definition of rape is somewhat scanty.

It also involves, under the law, the definition of rape as an act of sexual intercourse, with a person other than a man's wife. That doesn't take account the many cases of separation, for instance, short of legal separation in which rape can and does occur.

**EXCALIBUR -- Is that a common incident?**

**CHASE --** It's a common incident, yes. It's one way of retaliation, or revenge, and it's often used in that regard.

The other categories of rape under the law are rape with consent, if the consent is extorted by fraudulent means. That's to cover cases such as if a sex therapist, for instance, suggests that a woman's frigidity could be cured by sexual intercourse. The other type of case is where a man poses as a woman's husband and that would involve for instance, when a man is at work at night and a woman expects that the

man who gets into bed with her to her husband when in fact, he isn't.

Rape occurs very often in a home environment, too, or within a social context. That's why it's a very difficult crime to prosecute, because the minute it occurs in the home or in a circle of social acquaintances, the first thing the law has to establish is non-consent. And if the woman invited him there, or accompanied him to his apartment, she doesn't have a very easy time proving non-consent.

**EXCALIBUR -- Does it still occur that in court, where a woman who is actually bringing the charges against an accused rapist, is treated like the accused? I've heard of that type of harassment in court.**

**CHASE --** Well you understand that if, under the law, the whole area of defining rape, is the area of coming by a statement, "yes, the woman did not consent, and therefore a rape has occurred", will mean that there is an extensive attempt to prove consent on the part of the woman. I think no matter what sudden changes are made in the basic laws, a woman in a court of law often feels very much under attack.

She has to prove she is not a liar, that she is a credible witness, and that indeed, this is a case of non-consent.

**EXCALIBUR -- I guess you would like to see some changes in the law then?**

**CHASE --** To the extent of having rape as a category, as a legal category certainly revised a lot, certainly.

On the books it's still a life sentence. However, very often what occurs is that a rape case would be given maybe two to four years in very extreme cases. The whole area of sexual, or indecent assault should be put under examination. Because there's a real need for assessment of legal penalties for rape and assault.

What several rape crisis centres are requesting is that that whole area of the criminal code be in the area of sexual assault categories be redefined. The definition we suggest

is, sexual assault is a person attempting to use another person



sexually without that person's consent. So that covers cases of rape of males on males, by women on men, or whatever. If in the course of that sexual assault, if the man or the person injures the victim, that is a case of sexual violence, and should be treated as such. But by definition, sexual intercourse without the consent of the person is an act of violence, and should be treated therefore, as sexual assault.

**EXCALIBUR -- How busy is the Rape Crisis Centre, how many calls do you receive a week?**

**CHASE --** It varies, of course. In the summer months we're frenetically busy with crisis calls, and I think over July and August we had about 45 calls in August, and somewhat the same number in July. It's a heavy time for rape, I guess

because of the mobility of women, or just that people are generally outdoors more in the summer, or that there is reduced security in the summer in terms of open doors or windows.

**EXCALIBUR --** Instances of rape are getting, it seems, more press coverage recently. It's been suggested by some people, that this reflects the fact that the amount of rape occurring is on the increase. Do you think that's a valid statement?

**CHASE --** I think it's very difficult to assess that, because since the opening of the Rape Crisis Centre, of course, there has been an attempt to publicize rape and sexual assault in general, and to have it become less of a taboo area, so that people now report who might not have touched it before, or at least tell the rape crisis centre about it. I think our contacts with the media and various organizations are beginning to pan out and certainly our liaison with the crown attorneys' office is certainly beginning to improve. But rather than say that the incidence of rape is on the increase, all I can say for sure is that there is increased reporting of rape.

Now that may come from several sources and it probably has to do with women's attitude that they are not responsible for an act of rape. Previously society very much made a woman feel that she provoked the rape, that she had done something to turn a man on and had a large responsibility for what happened.

•see Selling of Women, page 14

## New Music Concerts

Seventh Sensational Season  
1977-78 Subscription Series  
beginning:

Saturday, October 1st, 8:30 p.m.

John Cage - 65th Birthday Concert

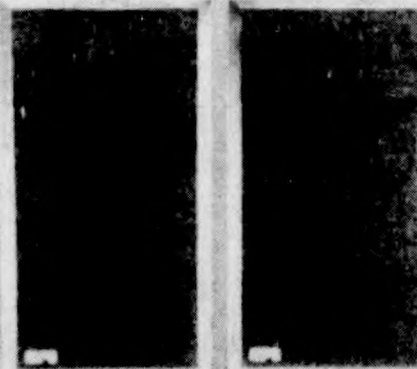
Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto

Student Series only \$17.00 (8 concerts) (Adults \$23.00)

Single tickets also available

for further information and season brochure call 967-5257

## The Computerized Receiver Is Here! WE FINANCE STUDENTS



### EPI 100 SPEAKERS

The EPI 100 has become the industry standard for bookshelf loudspeakers. Leading consumer and audiophile publications have consistently given the EPI 100 their top ratings.

### COMPLETE PACKAGE

ONLY \$775<sup>00</sup> \$26.29\*/mth.  
(Sugg. List \$1012.00 or less)

\*Based on 36 months

### NO CASH NEEDED!! (Upon Approval)

These offers are available with no cash down. Consumer Stereo Warehouse will finance its own customers on this offer. You can qualify! Up to 90 days! No cash required. Phone for advance credit approval in 10 minutes or less.

### ONKYO TX2500 RECEIVER

- SERVO LOCKED TUNING SYSTEM
- Apctouch control for the true audiophile
- 60 W. RMS Total
- L. ch (30 watts) for 0.05% THD
- R. ch (30 watts) for 0.78% THD
- Power specs taken from Consumer Guide Report Nov. '76.

### THORENS

### TD 166 MKII TURNTABLE

- New Iso-track tone arm
- 16 pole synchronous motor
- Rumble weighted - 65dB
- Wow and flutter .06%
- Floating suspension
- Includes Shure M95ED cartridge

Call about our Mystery Bonus Special!

**CS CONSUMER STEREO WAREHOUSE**  
3406 YONGE ST. 481-0123 482-3222  
(1 mile south of Hwy. 401)  
WE WILL NOT KNOWABLY BE UNDERBILLED!

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
LIBRARY

WE INSTALL ON THE PREMISES