

NEWS

Dating can be fun but no is not a four letter word

BY LARA MORRIS

"We went to his house for a few drinks. I was interested in him, but I had no intention of sleeping with him. Anyway, after a while he started coming onto me, kissing me, touching me. I wanted him to stop but he didn't listen to my protests. He kept saying he wanted to sleep with me. I told him I didn't want to but things kept progressing. I was saying "no" and pushing him away, but he kept going. It took me four years to call it rape, but I knew from the moment it happened that I felt violated and used. At the time it seemed that the only way to get away was to give in..."

This Dalhousie student is one of many women who have or will be acquaintance raped. The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), in its anti-date rape campaign, defines acquaintance rape as sexual assault committed by someone the victim knows, that means a classmate, neighbor, friend, date, co-worker or even boyfriend or husband. CFS states that only 1 per cent of date rapes are reported, but the American College and Uni-

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versity Date Rape Survey (1988) stated that one in four women surveyed were victims of rape and 84 per cent of their assailants were dating partners or acquaintances.

CFS reports that, when confronting the problems of date rape, there are a large number of misconceptions and misunderstandings that exist between women and men. The most valuable tool in dealing with problems of this nature, and therefore preventing date rape, is communication between partners. However, CFS states that dispelling myths is also important:

Myth: Women often say "No", when they mean yes.

Fact: No means no.

Myth: A person who has had consensual sex in the past with their partner can't be raped by that person.

Fact: Anytime a person does not want to have sex, but is forced to do so, that act is rape.

Myth: Agreeing to kiss or neck or pet means a woman has agreed to have intercourse with a man.

Fact: Everyone has the right to say no to sexual activity no matter what has preceded it.

Myth: People who don't fight back haven't been raped.

Fact: Having sex against your will means that you have been raped, whether or not you fight back. Just like having your wallet stolen is theft, whether or not you fight back.

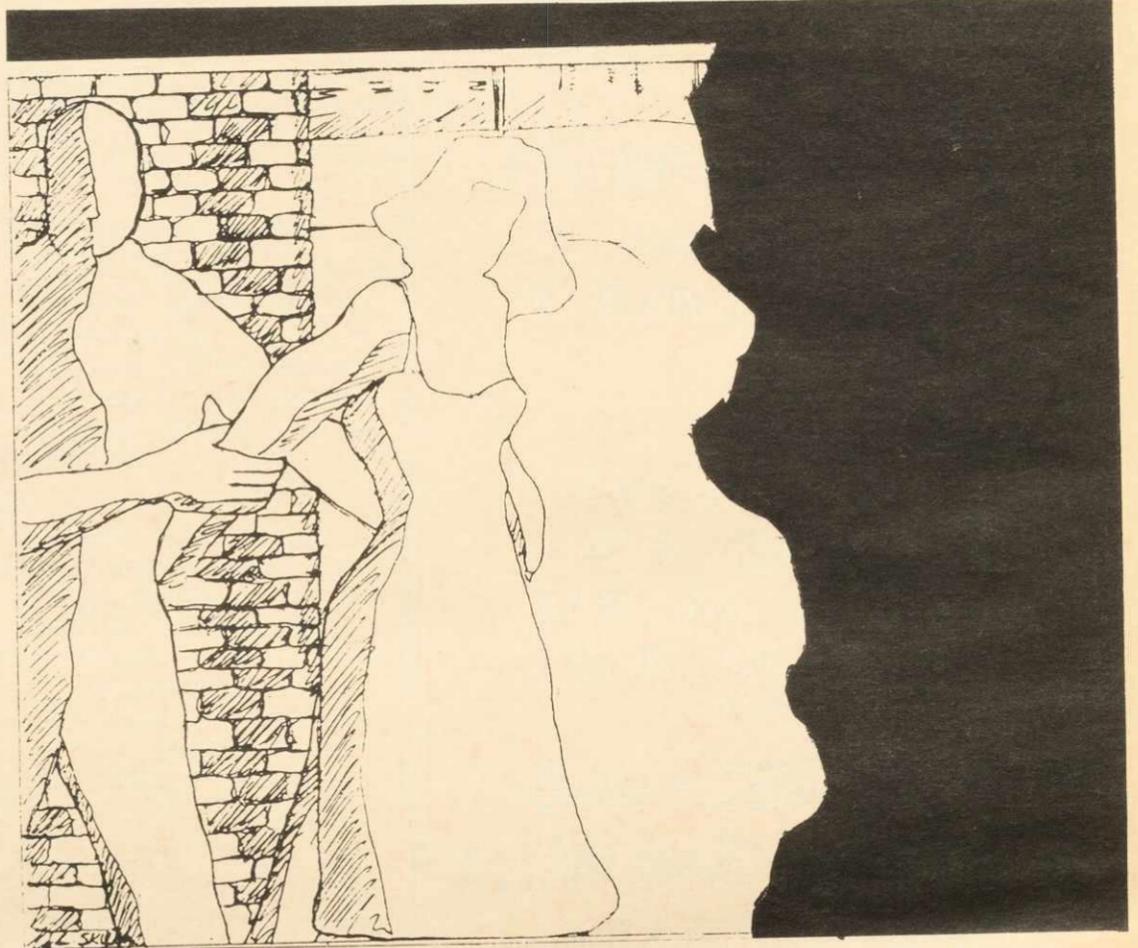
There are ways for women to protect themselves, but it is important to remember that victims of rape are never to blame. Nor is it possible to defend yourself completely against sexual assault. In deciding ways to decrease the risk of being attacked it is important that, as a woman, you think carefully about the risks and decide, for yourself, to what extent you are willing to curtail your activities. You have to set your own limits, both in relation to your own actions and in the actions of others towards you. CFS states the most obvious way for women to protect themselves is to act assertively and independently. Communicate your sexual limits clearly and remember that you always have the right to say, "NO", even if you've already had consensual sexual relations with this person before.

CFS suggests other ways to reduce date rape situations including:

- find out about a new date ahead of time
 - avoid being alone with a new date (try double dating or going out in groups)
 - avoid getting high or drunk, particularly on a first date
 - always trust your feelings and instincts
 - take a self-defence course before it is needed (one is available this fall through Dalhousie Student Union and Dalhousie Security)
 - always carry money for transportation
 - when you accept a ride or walk home from a friend or acquaintance, let others know when you will be home and who you are with
- Men must also play a role by improving communication between partners. CFS says men can help by:

- respecting a woman's right to autonomy, and never forcing or

• CONTINUED ON P.7



Planning to walk after dark?

BY SHANNON GOWANS

Do you plan to go out at night, for any reason; Thursday night at the Grawood, night class, last minute, late night term paper writing at the computer lab? Then you are at risk, especially if you are female. Any and all forms of assault can occur (muggings, purse snatchings, beatings, rapes) even on Dal campus. Assaults can occur at any time of the day, anywhere, to anyone, but the risk is greatest for women after dark and in poorly lit areas.

If you are not tucked in your apartment by dusk every night, then you will have to consider your safety after dark. By familiarizing yourself with the dangers, you can behave in a manner that will reduce your risk.

"Most assaults are incidents of opportunity," says Halifax Police Constable Paul MacDonald. By reducing the opportunity for attack, you protect yourself. Try to

stick to well lit, busy areas, avoiding trees, shrubs, and blind corners; anywhere someone could hide. That dark shortcut may save you a few minutes, but at what cost?

MacDonald advises to walk on the sidewalk, facing traffic, close to the curb and away from buildings, unless there are parked cars between which an attacker could hide. Try and know your route so you do not get lost.

It is important to be alert and aware of your surroundings when walking at night. Maintain eye contact with other pedestrians. Wearing a walkman reduces concentration and prevents you from hearing others.

If you think you are being followed, walk diagonally across the street, then back again. If you are being followed or are still uneasy, take action, do not wait until you are actually attacked. Run, yell, get attention, go to a well lit house, open store, or flag down a taxi. Try to get out of a potentially dangerous situation before it becomes hazardous.

One person alone is more vulnerable than a group so, if possible, walk with a buddy. Dalhousie intends to offer a combined walk home service and foot patrol, which should be operational by mid-October, says Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Vice-President Hilary Wells. In teams of two, consisting of a female and a male, the Tiger Patrol will report any suspicious behaviour to Dal Security who will then intervene

if the situation warrants. Anyone who wishes to be walked to their on-campus housing, bus stop, or car can call Security and request a Tiger Patrol escort.

Car owners are not immune to attacks. Parked cars provide attackers with many places to hide. Try to be accompanied to your car. Limit your time exposed in the parking lot by having your keys ready. Before entering your car check to see if anyone is hiding in it. Once inside lock the doors. Be careful getting out at your destination.

Don't let fear cause you to miss out on activities after dark, but be aware of the dangers and act accordingly. If you see suspicious activities report them to the police or Security. If you are attacked get help. Talk to a friend, report it to security or the police. (See reference numbers on this page).

Halifax Police Department offers a free presentation 'Woman Alone', including a film and discussion to any group of women that request it.

Self-defence courses are another way to protect yourself. D.S.U. and Dal Security are jointly sponsoring a 'Wen-Do' (women's martial art) course. This is a women only course running for six weeks starting Tuesday Sept. 17, 7-9:30 pm, at a cost of \$25. There will be a free demonstration on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7-9 pm in S.U.B. rm 224-226. Pre-registrar for the course at the D.S.U. office c/o Hilary Wells, or call 455-4240 for more information.

You can find assistance at:

Dal Security: _____ **494-3344 (24-hour line)**

Police: _____ **4105 (24-hour line)**

Service for Sexual Assault Victims: _____
_____ **425-0122 (24-hour line)**

Student Health Services: _____
_____ **494-2171 (24-hour line)**

Student Counselling Centre: _____ **494-1659**

Chaplain's Office: _____ **494-2287**