

## Safety Awareness and Rape Prevention

There are two ways to resist an attack: **passively or aggressively**. Passively can work once and awhile depending on the situation. Examples of this are: crying, sobbing; begging; vomiting or urinating on yourself; talk to and distracting the attacker; and pretending to faint. You do what your instincts tell you but always be ready to act aggressively if needed.

There are generally three kinds of rapist motive categories: Anger, Power and Sadism.

In anger assaults, the rapist is getting even for "some wrong he feels has been done to him, by life, by his victim at the time. He's in a frame of rage and attacks someone sexually." The anger rape is usually unpremeditated and impulsive, but the impulse drives the rapist into excessive force: the victim is punched, choked, and kicked into submission. An anger rapist *could* be discouraged by a potential victim who yells at him or puts up a physical struggle, thanks to the unpremeditated nature of the attack. Because the aggressor may not yet have fully decided to pursue this course of action, resistance may well change his mind. Here, even a half-hearted attempt might prove to be all it takes to end the assault. On the other hand, the rage the attacker is feeling might well be further *fed* by active resistance – this could be taken as yet another instance of one more person trying to deny him something he wants.

Power rape, according to Forensic Mental Health Associates, is a form of compensation, committed usually by men who feel unsure of their competence. Rape gives them a sense of mastery and control. Power rapists usually hunt for victims or seize opportunities that present themselves unbidden. A power rapist is unlikely to be discouraged by resistance because his whole self image is wrapped up in his attempt to prove mastery but a woman who chooses to fight one of these had better do a darned good job of it, because she could well end up fighting for her life.

The third type is defined, a sadistic rape, as eroticized aggression perpetrated by those whom the very act of forcible sex excites in ways that consensual sex can't. "If the anger components of aggression are eroticized, then you see sadistic acts, such as deliberate sexual torture, using an instrument to rape the victim.<sup>1</sup>" A sadistic rapist is interested in inflicting pain and lasting harm. Any countering aggression on the part of the victim could well *add* to the attacker's enjoyment of the experience, prompting him to further acts of depravity in an effort to provoke further resistance.

The question of to fight back or not is age-old, and there's no one right answer. You do what your instincts tell you, passively or aggressively, but always be ready to act aggressively if needed.

Here are some things to think about to prevent yourself from being a victim.

- Most men rapists when looking for a potential victim is look for **an easy target**. He wants to take advantage of the window of opportunity. Physical traits like hair and clothing can attract a potential rapist but it all depends on the background of that particular potential attacker. Just be street smart and practice proper prevention and don't be an easy target. Walk with confidence and look like you know where you're going (even if you don't). Always be aware of your surroundings, take someone with you if you can and if you see any odd behavior, don't dismiss it; go with your instincts!!! You may feel a little silly at the time, but you'd feel much worse if the guy really was trouble.
- The thing about these men is that they are looking to grab a woman and quickly move her to another location where they don't have to worry about getting caught.
- They also look for women on their cell phone, searching through their purse or doing other activities while walking because they are off guard and can be easily overpowered.
- Men are most likely to attack & rape in the evening hours and into early morning, ending before dawn. Statistics also indicate that attacks are more prevalent during the warmer months and weekends.
- **Rapists look for victims that are isolated.** When in a parking lot, garage, public bathroom, etc, what matters most is your isolation. Areas heavily frequented by foot traffic are far less likely to be chosen by a rapist. Likewise, badly-lit, less-frequented places will be favored for this type of attack.
  - Women have a tendency to get into their cars after shopping, eating, working, etc., and just sit (doing their checkbook, or making a list, etc. (DON'T DO THIS!) The predator may be watching you, and this is the perfect opportunity for him to get in on the passenger side, put a gun to your head, and tell you where to go. **AS SOON AS YOU GET INTO YOUR CAR, LOCK THE DOORS AND LEAVE.**

A few notes about getting into your car in a parking lot, or parking garage:

- Be aware: look around you, look into your car, at the passenger side floor, and in the back seat.
  - If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door.
  - A vehicle of any size can be used to facilitate a sexual assault. Try to park close to the entrance & try not to park when you are obstructed from view.
  - Look at the car parked on the driver's side of your vehicle, and the passenger side. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back into the mall, or work, and get a guard/policeman to walk you back out.
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- Statistics show that 7% to 30% of rapists carry weapons<sup>2</sup>, meaning the chances that your rapist will be armed can be just a little less than one in three. Battling an armed attacker while unarmed yourself is rarely a wise course of action to take, so be wise and be prepared.
  - Many rapists do carry rape kits that “could” include scissors. Many other items included in rape kits are cords, duct tape, condoms and lubricant, among others.
  - Remember you can use anything in your hands or nearby as a weapon to defend yourself with or put in between yourself and the attacker, but so can the attacker. Be aware of your surroundings and what could be used as a weapon: i.e. – umbrella, keys, grocery bags, purse, shopping cart, tree, etc.
  - If you put up any kind of a fight at all, they get discouraged because it only takes a minute or two for them to realize that going after you isn't worth it because it will be time-consuming; but remember the third type of rapist, sadism, so if you choose to defend and fight, do it with all your might until you are safe.
  - Several defense mechanisms are: If someone is following behind you on a street or in a garage or with you in an elevator or stairwell, try to observe any unique qualities they have or anything they say without engaging them or looking directly at them. Now you've seen their face and anything unique you could identify them in a line-up; but if they are intent on attacking you he knows it, it's all the more important to get away from him, even if he has a knife and you are risking injury. Because unless he's quite inexperienced, he's likely to kill you to leave no witnesses.<sup>3</sup>
  - ALWAYS take the elevator instead of the stairs when you can. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot. This is especially true at NIGHT!
  - Most rapists will leave a woman alone if she yelled or showed that she would not be afraid to fight back. Again, they are looking for an EASY target. You may feel a little silly at the time, but you'd feel much worse if the guy really was trouble. If someone is coming toward you, hold out your hands in front of you and yell STOP or STAY BACK!
  - If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back tail lights and stick your arm out the hole and start waving like crazy. The driver won't see you, but everybody else will. This has saved lives. In addition, most new cars now have a trunk release inside the trunk.
  - If the predator has a gun and you are not under his control, ALWAYS RUN! The predator will only hit you (a running target) 4 in 100 times; and even then, it most likely WILL NOT be a vital organ. RUN, preferably in a zig-zag pattern! Do not allow yourself to be taken to a secondary crime scene. Chances are you're not going to come back alive.
  - Most women are always trying to be sympathetic: STOP. It may get you raped, or killed. Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was a good-looking, well educated man, who ALWAYS played on the sympathies of unsuspecting women. He walked with a cane, or a limp, and often asked "for help" into his vehicle or with his vehicle which is when he abducted his next victim.

<sup>1</sup> Forensic Mental Health Associates.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice.

<sup>3</sup> John Douglas, legendary FBI profiler



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