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X THE CONSEQUENCES OF RESISTANCE DURING RAPE
A Review of the Research

NCJRS
AUG 6 1979
ACQUISITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the advisability of resistance during rape. However, little empirical research has been done which could demonstrate its effectiveness. Instead, articles have typically been based on political invective, sage personal opinion, or "a matter of principle". The present article surveys some of the literature on both sides, and particularly focuses on the few studies which present quantitative data about the outcomes of resistance. It was found to effect both the probability of escape and the probability of injury. Some recommendations are made about Whom, Where, When, and How to resist.

INTRODUCTION

Should a woman fight back when confronted by a rapist? Much contradictory advice has been published about this issue. The purpose of this article is to take an objective look at the evidence which suggests that resistance is the wiser strategy, then at the evidence which favors yielding. The only concern here is a practical one. Political and emotional diatribes about the subject will not be considered. How much does resistance increase the victim's chances of escape, and how much does it increase her chances of injury? The conclusions of this article will apply primarily to rape attempts by strangers.

SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

First, let's look at the methodological problems in studying this issue. The literature in this area has often been pretentious, with conclusions mired in a sea of ideological considerations and simplistic thinking. The primary difficulty is that little serious research has been done. Although hundreds of articles have been written about rape resistance, most were based on political invective, sage personal opinion, or hearsay. The majority have been phrased in simplistic, either-or, "should she or shouldn't she" terms. There has been little consideration of gradations of resistance, nor of measuring its effectiveness in terms of objective criteria. Resistance has usually been recommended as a matter of principle, with claims for its effectiveness thrown

in as a reassuring afterthought. Statistical support for these claims has usually been lacking, or based on retrospective interviews with the victims of completed rapes, who could only speculate about what tactics might have worked if they's tried them.

This brings to mind yet another difficulty which has plagued the literature--the tendency to resort to official crime statistics in evaluating resistance. Use of police department statistics to determine whether resistance works has often underestimated its efficacy. In many cases, women have shrugged off such incidents (when successfully dealt with) with bitter jokes and an air of resignation. Those women who resisted successfully were less likely to inform the police of the assault against them because they had already dealt with it. It is important that researchers recognize a bias in official statistics about rape, with unsuccessful resisters being over-represented. This has reduced the validity of some overall evaluations of the effectiveness of resistance, but hasn't compromised comparative evaluations of different ways to resist, since the tendency not to report successful repudiations is probably constant.

Another methodological problem in arriving at a judicious evaluation of resistance has been that some of its very real benefits are intangible. For example, many women have felt that they validated their individual rights and dignity by resisting, even if they were hurt or the rape was forcibly completed. Or, they felt pride that they answered the call to stand up for the dignity of women. At least they paid the rapist back in kind for the abuse he gave them. Rape victims who didn't resist

often experienced continuing self-recriminations of the type "Maybe some part of me was really asking for it or I probably would have fought back. If only I'd done..."

The organization of this article is straightforward. We will briefly examine some leading examples of the pro-resistance literature starting with the weaker essays and proceeding to those with a stronger empirical basis. We will then proceed in a like manner through the anti-resistance literature, after which we will weigh the pros and cons¹ of one side against the other. Finally, based upon the evidence already reviewed, we will try to formulate some tentative guidelines for action which will resolve the "should she or shouldn't she" question.

PRO-RESISTANCE LITERATURE

Andrea Medea and Kathleen Thompson militantly advocated physical resistance in their book Against Rape (1974). They described karate techniques of self-defense, complete with diagrams and step-by-step instructions for disassembling the rapist. They explained how to kick, strike with the hands, break a hold, and ward off a weapon. Medea and Thompson suggested

¹Some of the articles on both sides of this issue will be reviewed with a harsh pen because they were misleading or because their methodological deficiencies were too obvious to merit tactfulness. However, the author readily acknowledges that hindsight comes cheaply and that it is easier to be an "armchair quarterback" than to play on the field. Researchers often have a thankless, lonely, demoralizing task, and appreciation is expressed to all those whose efforts have brought us to our present level of awareness about rape resistance.

that the victim should take the offensive and frighten away the attacker with a lit railroad flare (p. 92), which she could carry in her pocket book. They also recommended specific viable defenses in the courtroom, should the rapist be so brazen as to file assault charges against the intended victim. They asserted that physical resistance is always appropriate, except when the rapist has a gun.

However, nowhere in their article did Medea and Thompson present evidence that resistance works (what research they did was based on a sample containing only victims of completed rapes). Medea and Thompson projected naive optimism about the intricacies of close-in fighting, especially in their comments on page 91:

...when [the rapist] is bent forward, grab his hair or the top of his head, and bring your weight down on him as if you were slamming a trunk. Double him up, and if appropriate, knee him in the face... If he gives you any trouble at all, knee him. Walk him over to unlock the door, or walk him to a busy street... If he does somehow roll out of your grip (which would be difficult); either run or kick him [*italics added*].

It isn't hard for us to see why this advice would fail. These two "self-defense experts" advised the woman to square off against the rapist with one foot forward (p. 81) and to knee him in the face. In these positions, the rapist can easily pull the woman's legs out from under her. This response is a conditioned reflex for any man whose head is pushed down in a fight. Instead of "walking the rapist to a busy street," the woman would probably find herself on the ground underneath him.

In the book, Rape: How to Avoid It and What to do About It If You Can't (1974), June and Joseph Csida strongly endorsed physical resistance. In the matter-of-fact tones of a "how to"

booklet, they suggested spraying the attacker with hairspray, teargas, or Mace. Also, they recommended he be stabbed with a hatpin, pencil, or set of keys, and perhaps attacked with aikido and karate. They asserted that the victim should run away, but not before the rapist has been at least momentarily disabled. However, the Csidas failed to acknowledge that prior psychological conditioning (e.g., basic training in the military) would be needed for the average woman to be able to apply such potentially lethal techniques. They spoke of the rapist as though he were a cold plywood figure on a target range, but in most cases the intended victim would find it hard to react to him that way. Another criticism is that the Csida's failed to provide empirical evidence that resistance works.

Proceeding on a much higher intellectual plane than the preceding authors, Susan Brownmiller wrote in the book Against Our Will (1975, p. 403) that the woman who attempts to bargain with the rapist by submitting should not expect to be treated non-violently in return. She mentioned several well-publicized cases where women who had submitted were later brutally murdered, and from this strongly recommended that women fight back physically against the rapist, since submission would not garner them better treatment, anyhow.

Brownmiller's advocacy of physical resistance, though more carefully-considered and realistic than that of other authors, was the one weak spot in her book. Most of her work was scholarly, well-documented, and thoroughly readable. Her book gives an excellent overview of the history and sociology of sexual assaults

on women. However, no quantitative research evaluating the efficacy of resistance had been done up to the time her manuscript went to press, so she had to make recommendations about resistance without any hard data to lean on. In the words of Brownmiller (p. 399):

Unfortunately no comparative study has ever been made of the behavior of victims of attempted rape versus the behavior of victims of completed rape. Impotence may be responsible for some thwarted rapes, but strong resistance seems the more logical possibility.

Regrettably, later attempts to evaluate rape resistance using quantitative means often turned out to be less subtle and informed than Brownmiller's educated guess was. James Selkin, a clinical psychologist at Denver General Hospital, also advocated rape resistance, including violence if necessary. The tone of his article closely echoed the axioms of militant feminism. In Psychology Today (Jan. 1975, p. 72), he advised "Women who are characteristically friendly and who like to help others are courting danger". This remark seemed to apply equally to the secretary in her office, the policewoman on her beat, and the nun in her classroom.

Poorly-reasoned, undisciplined statements were sprinkled throughout Selkin's article. For example, he claimed that one-quarter of the rape victims reporting during a two-year study period in Denver initially became vulnerable because they responded to a request for help. From this, he postulated "It is unwise to stop on the street to give a man a light or explain street directions...the safest stance for a woman alone...is to be aloof and unfriendly." Yet, the Denver Anticrime Program report actually

indicated (1976, p. 81) that only 12% of these rape victims were compromised while lending assistance. Moreover, the Denver data pointed to two situations very unlike this as the most frequent generators of sexual assaults: 47% of rape victims were accosted while alone in their own homes, and another 22% were accosted while walking in a nearby business or residential area. Similar results were obtained by Menachem Amir's (1971, p. 138) study of Philadelphia rapists. It is apparent that lending assistance had very little impact on Denver women's probability of being sexually assaulted, yet feeling free to do so probably had a liberating, positive impact on the quality of their emotional and social lives.

According to Selkin, the most effective response when the rapist persists is to scream, fight back, and run. His article included a lengthy discussion (p. 73) of ways to hurt the rapist. Selkin asserted that a third of the women who reacted physically in Denver were able to escape. However, a perusal of the Denver data shows that only 16% of those women who resisted physically did escape, compared to a whopping 54% of those who resisted verbally. Personal communication with the director of the study confirmed that the latter analysis is correct. Here Selkin greatly exaggerated the effectiveness of a form of resistance which only slightly increased the probability of escape (7% of non-resistors escaped).

His final ironic touch was to advise (p. 74) that resistance isn't dangerous, since only 9% of the Denver victims were seriously

injured. Selkin ignored the fact that the injury rate climbed to 37% amongst those who resisted or tried to run away from the rapist. Nine per cent of the total Denver sample were hurt, but this figure was based upon a majority of non-resisters.

Another study which was supposed to demonstrate the efficacy of resistance was conducted by Frank Javorek, an employee of a Denver consulting firm. Javorek not only concluded from his data that resistance is the best tactic, but recommended active physical resistance. After a statistical analysis of police records detailing 60 incidents of sexual assault, Javorek (1976, p. 14) determined that "Active resistance in the form of attempting to flee and call for help resulted in a high percentage of aborted rapes." Hence, he advised "[running away and crying out] appear to be effective forms of resistance against sexual attacks." Further, he recommended against trying to dissuade the rapist verbally.

However, Javorek failed to plan the technical aspects of his research carefully. The statistical analyses from which he drew these conclusions were remarkably weak and inappropriate. He derived five predictor variables (victim residence area, victim state of consciousness, talking with the attacker, screaming, running) from a stepwise regression equation for predicting rape. According to the computer output, resistance was associated with a low probability of completed rape, while talking with the attacker was associated with a high probability. Javorek claimed to be able to predict the outcome of any given encounter (escape vs. rape) with only a 19% error rate, contingent upon knowledge

of these five variables. However, the statistical model he employed was based upon logically untenable assumptions. The most ^{basic} problems with Javorek's statistical analyses were:

1. The number of cases in the sample he used was too small to generate a reliable regression equation. Javorek began his regression equation with 18 predictor variables, which means his sample size should have been at least 180 cases instead of the 60 he used. Ten cases per variable is considered the minimum standard for assuring reliability (Nunnally, 1967).

2. Javorek's initial use of 18 predictor variables constituted "a fishing expedition". Alpha error (which occurs when the null hypothesis is mistakenly rejected) guaranteed that at least a few of the predictor variables would appear to be associated with the outcome variable, simply by the laws of chance.

3. The variables Javorek selected for inclusion in the equation may not have been the genuinely important ones. Stepwise regression equations are automatically and artificially set by the computer to explain 100% of the variance in the dependent variable. His choice of statistical techniques would have made any variables look important, no matter how absurd or irrelevant they were.

4. Javorek failed to examine resistance from the standpoint of predicting the injury criterion. There is no way to even-handedly and scientifically advocate resistance or any other behavior without considering the full range of its consequences.

More recently, the tone of the debate about resistance has been elevated by higher quality information. Credit for this

belongs to the Queen's Bench Foundation, a San Francisco-based feminist group. With support from a government research grant, they collected case history data about actual sexual assaults, and performed a relatively logically-consistent analysis of their data (cf. San Francisco Women Against Rape, 1976 for an attempt to refute the Queen's Bench effort). One hundred and twelve victims were interviewed to determine which behaviors had been associated with a successful rebuttal, and the results were subjected to crosstabular and correlational analyses. Overall, Queen's Bench found that resistance did not assure escape from the rapist, but that it did improve the victim's chances. They reported on page 21 that sexual contact was prevented in 37% of the cases where resistance occurred, compared to only 10% amongst the non-resisters.

What type of resistance worked best? Contrary to Javorek's conclusions, Queen's Bench found that verbal challenge (swearing at, lecturing, or threatening the attacker) was the best way to prevent a rape. Women who were verbally aggressive were less likely to be penetrated than women who screamed or fought back (16% vs. 24% vs. 39%). Further, successful resisters more often attributed their success to what they had said to the rapist than to any of their other behaviors. Even so, it was found that not all verbal responses facilitated escape. According to Queen's Bench, pleading with the attacker had the least effect--many women who did this were raped.

When viewed in terms of the injury criterion, verbal resistance again proved the best form to utilize--if resistance

must be utilized. The rapist became angrier in 27% of all cases where any form of resistance was manifested, and he increased the level of abuse in 22% of these cases. However, he did this less often with verbal resistance than with screaming, running, or fighting back. The Queen's Bench (p. 27) found that the severity of the rapist's attack closely paralleled how violently the victim resisted. If she merely cursed at the rapist, her injuries tended to be less serious than if she scratched at or hit him.

Unfortunately, Queen's Bench never fully acknowledged the implications of their findings about verbal challenge. On page 109, they summarized the conclusions of their study with a statement advocating assertiveness and resistance, including physical assertiveness and self-defense tactics. They avoided the fact that physical resistance was less effective and more dangerous than verbal according to their own data. Perhaps Queen's Bench yielded to emotion (and feminist political dogma) in formulating their conclusions. Even so, they provided more solid data to the social planner and agency head than had any of the authors mentioned previously.

The issue of resistance during rape has been further investigated with an inventive, imaginative research technique. Stanley Brodsky (1976), a psychologist at the University of Alabama, had theatre students enact nine different scenarios simulating possible verbal responses to the rapist. He prepared videotapes for presentation to 199 persons attending a conference on rape prevention. These videotapes contained explicit enactments of the interaction

between the rapist and his victim prior to the actual sex act. Each of the nine scenarios was scored by the conferees in terms of its probable effectiveness at deterring the rapist. As in the case of the Queen's Bench study, Brodsky found that the conferees strongly endorsed aggressive verbal resistance.

Verbal attack, e.g., "Get the Hell away from me," received the highest average score of all of the responses. The conferees felt that "giving the rapist a piece of your mind" would work better than trying to distract him, befriend him, gain his sympathy, or appeal to his conscience. From this, Brodsky recommended that American women be taught how to express themselves more aggressively.

However, Brodsky's study had one damaging flaw-- his choice of a subject population. Most of Brodsky's raters were women (practically speaking, rape is never committed by females) and most were thoroughly adapted to a militant viewpoint about rape prevention. "Volunteers and employees of rape crisis centers" were not exactly the most disinterested and objective persons that Brodsky could have found to solicit opinions from. They had a personal investment in the outcome of the study, and the scenario ratings merely provided them with an opportunity to reaffirm their beliefs. (In fact, later studies by Brodsky surveying convicted rapists and sex offender treatment personnel let to opposite recommendations.)

DISCUSSION OF PRO-RESISTANCE LITERATURE

So what conclusions can we comfortably hold to after examining the pro-resistance literature? Not very many, it seems. Most of the articles we reviewed were distinguished by a lack of data. Csida and Csida and Medea and Thompson presented no objective evidence that resistance is an effective strategy. Selkin grossly misinterpreted the data of the Denver Anticrime Program, detracting from the debate rather than contributing to it. Javorek attempted to show that resistance is associated with escape, but used a statistical technique which suffers disrepute in the scientific community. Only the Queen's Bench presented reliable and convincing evidence that resistance does enable escape, but the effect was specific to verbal challenge. Fighting back simply did not produce the desired result, and attempting to flee didn't work either. Subdividing verbal resistance into nine different types, Brodsky compared videotaped enactments of each and concluded that a challenging verbal attack is the best ploy. In most respects, this result concurred with the Queen's Bench findings.

Thus, a review of the pro-resistance literature has tenuously established the conclusion that resistance does work, based mostly upon the Queen's Bench data. A woman's chances of escape can be maximized by resisting in certain ways. Preliminary introduction of the Denver Anticrime results (in refutation of Selkin) affirmed the superiority of verbal resistance, as did the Queen's Bench results. But effectiveness at achieving escape is not the only

criterion one must use when evaluating different types of resistance. Concern about injury to the victim is also an oft-mentioned criterion. Modes of resistance that lead to serious injury should be eliminated from consideration. Physical resistance may have this effect. We will now examine theories and data which suggest that it is indeed a strategy likely to result in injury. As before, we will begin with the weaker evidence and proceed to evidence with a stronger empirical basis.

ANTI-RESISTANCE LITERATURE

Frederick Storaska, in How To Say No To A Rapist--And Survive (1976), advocated cooperating with the rapist in an effort to relax him, and only attempting escape after his guard has fallen. In a theoretical analysis of the rape situation, Storaska emphasized that the rapist feels hostile and insecure with women--a description adopted from psychiatrists and clinical psychologists. Perhaps his mother or another important female figure in his early life rejected him. In any case, the rapist attempts to build up his ego by subjugating a woman who symbolizes his mother. The overt sexuality of his behavior disguises his hostile and violent intentions. According to Storaska, threats or physical resistances by the victim could serve as a trigger mechanism for violence to become the overt purpose of the interaction.

A close offshoot of this psychoanalytic interpretation which Storaska also argues is that the rapist demonstrates his masculinity by behaving in an intrepid, dominating manner stereotypical of

the male. In essence, he is trying to reassure himself or his peers that he is a he-man. Resistance could be taken as a denial of his manhood. Either theory suggests that hostility or resistance would be extremely threatening and likely to elicit violence. A third psychoanalytic argument against resistance is that some rapists exhibit paranoid tendencies. The rapist can more easily project his hostility when resistance occurs, interpreting it as "attack" behavior.

Another theoretical analysis of the rape situation counsels compliance, at least, physical compliance. Howard (1977, 1979) developed a situational model of violent crime situations which purports to identify the major social psychological determinants of violence, given that the victim and attacker are strangers. It was designed to predict the occurrence of violence for such diverse crime situations as battery, robbery, rape, and kidnapping. This model asserts that physical resistance is a precipitant of violence in all crime situations. According to this model, the criminal must attempt to subdue or intimidate his victim before he can take what he wants. He must overcome the victim's opposition with whatever means are at hand. Resistance could stimulate two psychological processes which break down the social controls inherent in the situation, enabling him to become violent. First, it would enable the criminal to deindividuate himself. That is, those norms which ordinarily restrain him from violent attack would be removed or neutralized. He would be freed from all responsibility as an individual. Sensory input overload and physiological arousal, inherent in a fighting situation, might

acquire a much greater temporary influence on his actions than his childhood moral training could exert (Zimbardo, 1969).

The second psychological process facilitated by resistance is dehumanization of the victim. Violent attack would become more palatable after this rationalization, because the victim would be seen as unworthy of the moral restraints which regulate the treatment of normal people. For example, resistance might place her into a stereotyped "enemy" category of persons, whom the embittered criminal blames for the bad breaks which have befallen him. She could be seen as cruel and bestial, or as one of the "hypocrites" and "conformists" who characteristically criticize and persecute him. This rationalization might provide the license needed to attack the victim without feeling guilty.

Howard reinforced his theoretical model, and his argument against resistance by summarizing three statistical analyses of police homicide records which showed the effect of "fighting back". In Philadelphia, Wolfgang (1958) found that 25% of homicides in a five-year period were precipitated when the eventual victim antagonized or resisted his assailant. Horowitz (1975) found that 51% of the murders in Poland during the 1930's were in response to a real or imagined threat from the victim. And, Palmer (1974) obtained similar results in a cross-cultural survey of the police homicide records for 29 preliterate tribal groupings. If victim provocation to robbery-murder occurs so frequently, Howard argued that victim provocation² to rape-injury is an equally plausible phenomenon. However, he failed

²The reader has probably noted the great emphasis put on concern about injury, while little has been said about the possibility that resistance could lead to the victim being murdered. This is because rape-murder is a very rare phenomenon. Susan Brownmiller (p. 216)

to provide any quantitative data to support his theorizing.

One critique of Howard's article argued that the psychological dynamics found in sexual assault situations are probably different from those in murder situations. Although this may be a valid objection, the principal test of his model lies in the real-world consequences of resistance. Does it increase the incidence of violence specifically in the rape situation? Rapists themselves could provide some particularly interesting comments on this issue. What do they think they would do if resistance were encountered?

While preparing a paper for delivery at the International Symposium on Victimology (1976), criminologists Duncan Chappell and Jennifer James conducted structured interviews with 50 convicted rapists at Atascadero State Hospital in southern California. Atascadero is a maximum security institution for treatment of the mentally disordered sex offender. These rapists were primarily white, in their middle twenties, and from the lower middle-class.

When asked "How does a victim make you angry?", 86% responded that insults, threats, or physical resistance usually have that effect. The rapists responded in a like manner to the question "How could your victim make her situation worse?" Conversely, they indicated that "cooperation" and "requests for sympathetic understanding" usually make them less likely to injure the victim.

estimates it occurs twice in every 1000 rapes, and Frederick Storaska (p. 21) estimates it occurs once in about every 2000 cases. It was their very rarity which made the cases of Jack the Ripper and the Boston Strangler so famous. The position taken in this article is that resistance increases by severalfold the probability of being murdered, but that this probability is still infinitesimally small.

"Requests for sympathetic understanding" also was seen as the most effective way for the victim to obtain her freedom without being forced into intercourse, according to the survey group.

By happy coincidence, a portion of the Queen's Bench study was devoted to closely-related issues. A survey was made of a similar group of 50 rapists incarcerated in California. Although they de-emphasized their results in this area, the feminist group obtained essentially the same responses as did Chappel and James. Speaking from personal experience, the felons indicated that physical resistance had often enraged them to the point of violence. They indicated that feigning shock, illness or pregnancy would be a more prudent and effective way to discourage the rapist. Ironically, most rapists felt that the victim should resist aggressively, although they also predicted that this wouldn't work. Apparently, they were speaking from a moral standpoint rather than a practical one. Queen's Bench (pp. 108, 109) summarized these results on a philosophical note:

Of the offenders who intentionally injured their victims, most did so when she resisted...when confronted with attack, each woman must make a choice which is highly personal [between possible injury and certain rape]...

It's hard to put much faith in such ruminative, post-hoc data. Rapist would not necessarily respond in an objective and disinterested fashion to either survey. We are all aware that some women who don't resist are beaten up anyhow. If rapists say that they would be more likely to beat up the victim who resists, we must check real-world data to ascertain whether their behavior followed suite. While Queen's Bench has already provided

evidence that injuries are more serious with resistance, it didn't indicate whether they were actually more frequent.

The first study that directly addressed this question was done by Agopian, Chappell, and Geis (1975) in Oakland, California. It examined an unusual type of rape; i.e., 63 cases in which the victim and attacker were of different races. In this tension-laden situation, resistance had an extremely deleterious effect. Fifty-five percent of women who resisted were physically beaten, whereas only 11% of those who didn't resist received injuries. (The latter results concur with those found in studies of intraracial rape, which also generally showed a 10-15% rate of injuries requiring medical examination amongst non-resisters.) As in the Medea and Thompson study, however, Agopian, Chappell and Geis examined only cases of completed rape, so it was not possible to determine the positive benefits of resistance.

The second, most balanced and conclusive study of the effects of resistance was done by the Denver Anticrime Program. (Selkin frequently misquoted and misinterpreted the results of this investigation.) It included the broadest range of information currently available, and realized the most sophisticated data interpretations. Giacinti and Tjaden (1976) found that 37% of Denver women who employed some type of resistance were injured. Attempting to run from rapist was the most dangerous form of resistance, resulting in 5.3 times more incidents of injury than non-resistance. Even verbal resistance was sufficient to almost double the number of injuries.

The Denver data also clearly illustrated the other side of the coin. Indisputably, resistance does facilitate escape from the rapist. Looking at all methods of resistance combined, 57% of the Denver victims managed to avoid coitus with the criminal whereas only 7% of those who didn't resist avoided coitus. Physically fighting back was not a solution, however. This resulted in a very low percentage of escapes, whereas both screaming and talking with him resulted in escape slightly more than half of the time. Remarkably, 85% of victims who attempted to flee the rapist successfully avoided coitus, but these women paid dearly with an alarming injury rate.

CONCLUSIONS

What can we decide after this literature review about the advisability of resistance? As Queen's Bench says, one has to choose between injury and rape in deciding whether to resist. The strongest evidence in favor of resistance came out of the Queen's Bench study and the Denver Anticrime Study, which used real-world data to demonstrate that resistance does work--sometimes. Selkin and Javorek attempted to back up this point with some fairly superfluous evidence which was easily rebuffed by this author. But, the basic point still remains--in two studies it was found that actual rape victims who resisted were frequently able to repel the rapist. Verbal resistance proved most effective. These studies demonstrated that challenging the rapist is justified when escape is the criterion.

Another picture emerged when injury was the criterion. Howard's and Storaska's theoretical analyses of the rape situation predicted more injuries amongst resisters. Two surveys of convicted rapists in California correctional facilities predicted the same outcome. Two real-world studies--the Denver Anticrime Study and the Oakland study, demonstrated conclusively that resisters are more likely to be injured. The Queen's Bench study found that injuries were more serious amongst resisters, as well as more frequent. Such a convergence between theoretical predictions, expert judgments and real-world data is rarely found in the social sciences, and certainly suggests a stable, meaningful phenomenon. Women's activist leaders should take heed of these findings, which indicate that a high price tag is often attached to resistance.

Perhaps the mature question is not whether women should resist, but what they should do. Given the current state of American sexual folkways, resistance is as much an inevitable political statement as if is an effort at self-protection. There are emotional and spiritual benefits to be gained from self-assertion. This article can provide an important service by presenting four research-based recommendations as to how women should resist in order to have maximum effect at minimum risk. The advice, presented below, is broken down to answer the questions: whom, where, when, and how.

Whom to Resist:

In one of the more fact-bound portions of their book, Medea and Thompson presented statistics suggesting that attackers who

behave hostilely and contemptuously have a particularly strong predilection towards violence, and that such an emotional constellation is more frequently found among strangers than amongst suitors who are related to the victim. Thus, physical resistance or retaliation is more dangerous with strangers.

When dealing with a stranger, the Queen's Bench and Brodsky recommended that attempts to retaliate physically be limited to the rapist who seems calm, matter-of-fact, and timid. Sharp verbal challenges are also best limited to this type of rapist.

Where to Resist:

Resistance is more likely to succeed if the victim is near potential help, or can lead the assailant to a location where he is vulnerable to intervention. Most criminals fear surveillance. According to Storaska, the chances of being helped are higher if the victim is within earshot of friends (preferably male). However, even proximity to friends sometimes isn't sufficient protection against rapists. Medea and Thompson (p. 134) conducted a survey amongst rape victims which suggested that there are no safe places to resist the attacker. Help was nearby in fully 35% of the completed rapes they studied, yet the victim was either too embarrassed to scream, or the bystanders were unwilling to interfere.

When to Resist:

Storask's (p. 50) advocated delayed resistance; that is, waiting for the assailant to drop his guard and/or for a more favorable situation to arise. This was probably bad advice. Continued involvement leads to an increased likelihood of rape.

Data from the Queen's Bench study indicated that resistance during late stages³ of the rape is exceedingly dangerous. Viano (1975, p. 63) shares this belief. A better strategy is to actively resist during early stages--when the rapist is still "testing" to see if the victim can be intimidated. At this point he has not yet committed himself to a serious crime. There is less to lose if he quits the assault. Finally, if the rapist continues the assault in spite of the victim's active resistance, she is well-advised to cooperate. In one of his better paragraphs, Selkin advised (p. 74):

It is important that women resist at the very beginning of the attack, when the assailant first makes his intentions known. It's easier for him to look for a more cooperative victim than to struggle to overcome one who has already shattered his hopes for a smooth sex fantasy trip.

How to Resist:

Considerable research has already been presented bearing on this issue. For example, the Queen's Bench found that verbal resistance was more effective than either physical resistance or screaming, and was less dangerous than the other two alternatives. Additionally, the Denver statistics indicated that verbal resistance

³Both Storaska and Brownmiller point to one notable exception to the early resistance rule. Even if sexual contact has already been established, it is never too late to resist if the rapist wants to tie his victim up. This is because she loses all options to protect herself once she allows herself to be made bound and helpless. Several famous rapist-murderers liked to tie their victims before killing them, because that way they couldn't put up a struggle. Thus, the rape victim should demur and immediately renew her resistance if the rapist produces wire or rope for the purpose of binding her. This is potentially the point of no return.

was quite effective, and less dangerous than the other two alternatives. Surveys amongst convicted rapists indicated the same thing.

Let's refine the advice in this article. What type of verbal resistance would be most effective? Screaming is out because it could shock the criminal into violence. Pleading with him could create the appearance of the stereotypical, easily-intimidated, passive female. Taking these factors into account, the Queen's Bench advocated aggressively swearing at or challenging the assailant. This probably is the most effective response, so long as it is attempted immediately, and the victim doesn't get carried away in the excitement of the moment and threaten the rapist. According to Howard's and Storaska's theoretical analyses, and to Chappel and James' survey results, threatening the rapist will only provoke him.

Another conception of the rapist is that he will respond to requests for sympathy. Chappell and James provided excellent data to support this. Their sample of convicted rapists believed that the victim should claim to be sick, recently operated on, suicidal, or pregnant to obtain the best chance of escaping. They also indicated that feigning psychosis, retardation, or a general state of slovenliness sometimes helps. (A new commercial product available in California, "Rapel," which simulates the odor of skunk oil, is effective to this end if applied to one's own body. The odor will easily wash off once the intended victim has safely arrived home.)

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