



#Not Okay

Someone is sexually assaulted every 2 minutes in America

Bloodshot eyes. A sensation of pain shooting down your body. The tears have dried from your pillow and your underwear is flung across your room.

All of the violent memories from the night before flood your mind with no intent of stopping. The bruises line your thighs and your hair is matted to your skull. You immediately realize what happened: The boy you had given your heart to for nine months had taken advantage of you.

He's taken your innocence.

The one piece of yourself you had been saving.

He raped you.

The demented reality of this is that it happens every day. Every two minutes someone in America is sexually assaulted. Nearly one in six women will report some kind of sexual assault in their lifetime and even more go unreported. According to the Rape and Incest National Network, approximately nine in 10 sexual assaults go unreported. Females between the ages of 16 and 19 are four times more likely than the general population to experience sexual assault of any form. Research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that approximately one in six boys and one in four girls are sexually abused before the age of 18.

Rape and sexual assault are prominent issues in this year's elections. Two nights before the second presidential debate, the Washington Post released a video of Donald Trump making crude and vulgar remarks about women in 2005 with the host of "Access Hollywood," Billy Bush. Trump has since apologized for the comments and excused them as "locker room talk."

After the video was released, hundreds of thousands of victims have shared their stories via social media, including Canadian writer Kelly Oxford. She tweeted "Women: tweet me your first assaults. they aren't just stats. I'll go first: Old man on a city bus grabs my [vagina] and smiles at me, I'm 12."

After her post, #NotOkay was trending in the US. The post was not intended to bash Trump, but rather to empower victims to feel strong enough to speak out. For two full days afterward, Oxford received nonstop tweets of women sharing their first-assault stories where everyone can see.

But rape and sexual assault don't only happen on TV shows or to strangers far away. It happens to people in Kansas. In Wichita. To students who go to Maize.

'That's what guys are supposed to do'

Eva Miller wanted to go to a club one night with her friend.

"We couldn't get anyone else to go with us," Miller said. "So we decided that just the two of us would go and we would stay close by each other all night."

Not long after they got there, some boys

approached them and asked them to dance. They danced for a while, but her friend walked away with one of them and Miller was left alone. She didn't want to lose her friend, so she decided to go find her.

"As soon as I started to walk away, the guy grabbed me and held me against him with what I'm sure was the tightest grip he could possibly have," Miller said. "The next thing I know, he's dragging me towards the door to leave, and I was trying my best to fight out of his grip, but it wasn't working. I kept telling him to let go because I wanted to find my friend but he was ignoring me. When we finally got right up to the door, he said, 'Let's just go back to my place, she'll be fine.'"

She continued to argue and say she just wanted to find her friend. The boy had caused such a scene that the bouncers came over and told him to let her go.

She went to find her friend and try to get as far away from him as possible, but he found her.

"He grabbed me again, but this time he was a lot more aggressive," Miller said. "Once he had a hold of me, he reached his hand up my skirt and started whispering things in my ear as if that was going to make me more comfortable with the situation. I was finally able to wiggle my arm out from under his grip enough to elbow him in the side and get him off of me."

Once she got away, she went on a frantic search to find her friend.

"On the way home, I tried to explain the story to her, but before I could get to the details she cut me off by saying, 'Eva, you have to realize you were at [the club]. That's what guys are supposed to do. You should have expected it.'

"As soon as she said that, I shut my mouth, took a deep breath and continued the rest of the way home in silence."

'I was a target for predatory behavior'

Nichole Jones said she was first sexually abused when she was 4 years old.

"My mom had an abusive boyfriend, Fred, who would beat my mother in front of me and my younger brother every day," Jones said. "And he would also rape her as well. But when she was not around, I became his new target. It happened almost every time we were alone."

When things ended with him and her mother, Nichole told her mother what he did to her, but her mother only dismissed it.

Years later, Jones' struggle with sexual violence was not over. She said she was raped at 10 years old by two teenage boys who were living in her neighborhood at the time. She had known them since she had moved in.

Due to what had happened previously in her life, she said she felt that she was more mature than the other girls her age and that is what drew them to her.

"I'd fallen into a trap I wasn't able to escape from," Jones said. When her mother found out, she blamed Nichole.

Names have been changed to protect victims' identities.

Where to get help Maize counseling

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“ I don't care what you were wearing, I don't care if you were very high or whatever. Ultimately, I am an advocate for students ”
-Lyn Brown

Wichita
Area
Sexual
Assault
Center

Counselor Lyn Brown suggests the Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center to victims in the Wichita area.

You can contact them at (316) 660-5290 or visit 355 North Waco, Suite 100

“She grounded me, called me a whore and a slut. She slapped me, pushed me, shut me out,” Nichole said.

Her grandmother convinced her mother to press charges against the boys. They tested evidence for a rape kit and had a forensics interview. With a rape kit, a medical professional collects DNA and collects the clothes the victim is wearing.

Nothing ever happened to the boys.

Once people at school found out, she was badly bullied. It got so severe, she decided to move schools.

After she moved, her cousin came to visit and told the kids in her new neighborhood and she again became a target for mocking.

“One boy invited me to his house, just to get his hands down my pants and force himself onto me,” she said. “His name was John. I was 11, and he was 15. A few weeks later, a boy named William pulled me over when I was trying to play hide and seek, groped me and wouldn’t let me leave. He was 19. That was how it always was. I was a target for predatory behavior.”

When she was a freshman at Maize, she dated a boy who was 17. Nichole said he treated her badly.

“Whenever we were together, he would be all over me,” she said. “Hugging me, trying to kiss me, trying to be on my body somehow,” Nichole said. “That was only when we were in public. When we weren’t, he would grope me, try to take off my clothes, and get on top of me no matter how many times I yelled at him to get off of me.”

He would even pressure her and force her to get undressed in front of her friends. He forced himself on her so many times she eventually gave in, giving him what he wanted.

“He would shower me with gifts and that would make me convince myself that he didn’t mean what he was doing,” Nichole said. “That I could take what he was doing, because I didn’t want to hurt his feelings.”

She eventually broke up with him.

Nichole began to eat less, drink alcohol, use drugs, self harm and even had multiple suicide attempts.

“After a long time of trying to understand what happened to me and seeing how much it has affected me, I am slowly starting to find myself,” Nichole said. “I am learning how to take care of myself and people are taking care of me. I have a loving girlfriend and beautiful people who surround my life. Every day is a horrendous battle, but I keep fighting.”

‘He got a year and I’m doing life’

When Sophia Johnson was 13, her parents made her brother take her to a Maize football game. He left her by herself so that he could be with his girlfriend. When she found her friends, they introduced her to a boy named Rick.

“He told me I was pretty and kissed my hand as we watched the high schoolers play football,” Sophia said.

When Rick asked for her number, she gave

it to him.

“I was naive... No, I was 13 and I wanted to feel love,” Sophia said.

After a few weeks of texting and getting to know each other, he invited her to a party. He offered to help her sneak out and take her there. She agreed, he picked her up, and they went.

“I was innocent, unaware of the dangers, but part of me knew I should turn around and go home,” Sophia said.

They got to the party, and Sophia said that she was instantly uncomfortable. She spent the night sitting in a corner next to a boy in a black hoodie but lost Rick.

After a few hours, she was ready to leave, so she got up to find Rick. When she found him, she noticed he was drunk. She said she knew he shouldn’t be driving, but she was ready to go. He nodded, said goodbye to his friends, and they started to leave.

When they were almost out of the house, he grabbed her and pulled her up the stairs. She tried to wiggle to get free, but that only made him tighten his grip.

She begged him to let her go, but he ignored her and shoved her into a bedroom. She began to run to the door, but he blocked her with his body.

“He grabbed my shoulders tightly and threw me onto the bed. My body was pinned underneath him, and I couldn’t move,” she said.

She tried to scream, but he covered her face with a pillow.

Again, she pleaded for him to let her go but he continued to ignore her. “My voice was weak as I felt him lifting up my skirt,” Sophia said. “His cold hands grabbed my hip, and I screamed again. He sat up and smacked my thigh aggressively, making me yelp in pain.”

He pressed himself against her using his body weight to pin her down.

“His hand made its way to my lady parts, thrusting his fingers roughly into me,” Sophia said. “I begged him to stop, the tears of pain and fear running through my body. I felt my body being swallowed into a hole of muffled screams and painful nightmares. My voice began to hurt, and I could not scream for much longer.”

When he was finished, he got up and she felt the relief of his weight off of her. But she then heard the sound of his belt coming undone. She felt him hovering above her, and he was saying things she couldn’t understand. His hands found her thighs again, opening them wider this time.

“I felt his grip on the pillow release as his warm hips touched my shaky thighs,” Sophia said. “The next few moments have always been a blur, but I remember screaming, screaming in agony. Crying out for a god I didn’t believe in to save me.”

His grip once again tightened on the pillow. She tried to fight back, but he was too strong. She began to see dots and passed out.

When she woke up, she was on her front porch and her dress was ripped. She was in too much pain to stand. She checked her watch for the time but her vision was still

blurry. The only number she could make out was the first: the number two.

“If I can just crawl to the living room I’ll be alright,” I thought to myself,” Sophia said. “I brought myself to my hands and knees. My knees shook but I had to get into the house..I leaned against the door and fell upon the cold hard tile.”

She cried as she used the wall as a support to help her get to her room.

When she was finally in her room, she began to think about what happened. She blamed herself and asked herself questions like “Why was I so stupid? Why didn’t I tell him no?”

Her family began to notice a change in her. She wasn’t eating, she began to self harm, stole liquor, and even contemplated taking her life.

81 percent of women and 35 percent of men report significant short-term or long-term impacts such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Source: National Sexual Violence Resource Center

One morning she was doubled over on the bathroom floor vomiting. She was so weak from not eating enough that she fainted.

She woke up in a hospital and her mother was talking to a doctor. When they noticed she was awake, they rushed over to her. The doctor was asking many questions, but the only one she heard was the one her mother asked.

“Sophia, how did you get pregnant?”

She told her mother she was raped. Her mother was horrified, and the doctor left the room and came back with more doctors. Her doctor talked to her about options, and she decided that she was going to carry the baby, even though there were lots of risks.

She went to all of her regular doctor appointments and eventually moved schools because of bullying.

When the students at her new school found out, she was bullied again.

In court, the boy admitted to raping her and even admitted to letting his friends molest her while she was unconscious. When he took her home, he threw her onto the porch. She had to go to counseling, but she didn't think it was helping.

Despite the hate and stress, she was excited for her little girl to come. She painted her room pink and had a crib in there. She had everything ready for when she came.

When she went to her obstetrician 32 weeks into her pregnancy, she received devastating news.

Her daughter was dead.

She was induced into labor, and they took her baby away.

"I saw them lift her away, but there was no crying," Sophia said. "There was no life inside her little purple body. She was so tiny and innocent. I asked if I could hold her, but they wouldn't let me."

Eventually, the nurse let her hold the baby.

She cried while she held her.

Hours later, the doctor came back and told her that the baby would have been too small to survive even if she was healthy.

Sophia, who is now 16, still thinks about what happened to her, but stopped counseling about a year ago. She says that she still can't sleep some nights because that night's events replay in her mind.

"He got a year, and I'm doing life even if I'm the victim," Sophia said. ■

—Paige Young

NOT ASKING FOR IT



Out of every 1,000 rapes, six people are prosecuted



Approximately 1.8 million adolescents in the United States have been victims of sexual assault



About 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner



The chances that a woman will develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after being raped are 50 to 90 percent



It is estimated that one in four girls and one in seven boys by age 18 will have been the victim of some form of sexualized violence



One rape occurs every eight hours and 18 minutes