

APPENDIX J:

RAPE INFORMATION SELF-TEST

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ANSWERS AND COMMENTARY

Rape Information Self-Test

The following are statements often associated with rape cases. Please write "T" beside the statements you believe are true or mostly accurate, or an "F" beside the statements you believe are false or mostly inaccurate. (This is a self-test for your information only. All answers are confidential.)

- _____ 1. A person who was truly raped would be extremely upset on the witness stand.
- _____ 2. Absence of semen in the complainant's vagina argues strongly against a rape having occurred.
- _____ 3. If two people know each other very well, sexual intercourse between them cannot be rape.
- _____ 4. Most sexual assaults are the result of a miscommunication.
- _____ 5. A rape victim with no stab wounds, broken bones or similar physical injuries has not really been harmed.
- _____ 6. Most men who commit rape do not have access to consensual sex.
- _____ 7. Most women who are raped are raped by men they know.
- _____ 8. Men are more likely to rape women who dress provocatively.
- _____ 9. Male on male rape is even less reported than male/female rape.
- _____ 10. A person who has really been raped would report the assault immediately.
- _____ 11. Most nonstranger rapists are good candidates for traditional outpatient psychotherapy as an alternative to incarceration.
- _____ 12. Although rape victims suffer severe emotional trauma as a result of the rape, they usually recover within six months to a year.
- _____ 13. When alcohol is involved in the alleged rape, women are perceived as having even less credibility than usual.
- _____ 14. Being raped by a stranger causes greater emotional trauma than being raped by someone you know.
- _____ 15. The majority of nonstranger rapists are repeat offenders.

- _____ 16. It will be emotionally easier for a rape victim to testify if the trial date is at least a year after the rape.
- _____ 17. Real rape victims give completely consistent statements each time they recount the assault.
- _____ 18. Victims of stranger rape are more likely to report the assault to the police than victims of nonstranger rape.
- _____ 19. A woman who asked the alleged rapist to use a condom was giving consent.
- _____ 20. The term "rape" can be applied only if the victim struggles or yells, "No!"

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The following are statements often associated with rape cases. Please write "T" beside the statements you believe are true or mostly accurate, or an "F" beside the statements you believe are false or mostly inaccurate. (This is a self-test for your information only. All answers are confidential.)

- _____ 1. A person who was truly raped would be extremely upset on the witness stand.
- FALSE.** Rape victims' behavior during trial will vary widely according to their personality, individual strategies for coping with trauma, stage of recovery, life situation and many other factors.
- About half of victims demonstrate a "**controlled style**," which means they hide their feelings and appear calm. The other half demonstrate an "**expressive style**," which means they display fear, anger and anxiety by crying, sobbing, smiling or acting restless or tense. These victims' reactions are understood as manifestations of rape trauma syndrome, which falls within the category of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as classified in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV).
- _____ 2. Absence of semen in the complainant's vagina argues strongly against a rape having occurred.
- FALSE.** Penetration can occur without ejaculation. Many perpetrators are sexually dysfunctional and do not ejaculate during the rape.
- _____ 3. If two people know each other very well, sexual intercourse between them cannot be rape.
- FALSE.** Sexual intercourse forced by an acquaintance, date or family member is rape. The issue is lack of consent, not the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator
- _____ 4. Most sexual assaults are the result of a miscommunication.
- FALSE.** Sexual assault is an issue of power and control. Most sexual assaults are premeditated and are not "crimes of passion" or the result of miscommunication.
- _____ 5. A rape victim with no stab wounds, broken bones or similar physical injuries has not really been harmed.
- FALSE.** Although rape victims rarely sustain serious physical injuries, their psychological injuries are profound. In the national study *Rape in America*, 70% of victims reported no physical injuries, 24% reported minor physical injuries and only 4% reported serious physical injuries. However, almost every rape victim experiences rape trauma syndrome and a high percentage experience long term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Rape victims have far higher rates of contemplated and attempted suicide than do nonvictims. Many turn to alcohol and drugs to self-medicate their trauma.

_____ 6. Most men who commit rape do not have access to consensual sex.

FALSE. Psychologist Nicholas Groth, director of Forensic Mental Health Associates and author of *Men Who Raped: The Psychology of the Offender*, has seen more than 3,000 sex offenders in 25 years of practice. He has written that "All the offenders we have seen were sexually active males involved in consenting sexual relationships at the time of their offense."

_____ 7. Most women who are raped are raped by men they know.

TRUE. According to the *Rape in America* study, 78% of female rape victims knew the man who raped them. Nine percent of the victims were raped by husbands or ex-husbands, 10% by boyfriends or ex-boyfriends, 11% by their fathers or stepfathers, 16% by other relatives, and 29% by other non-relatives, such as friends or neighbors.

_____ 8. Men are more likely to rape women who dress provocatively.

FALSE. This is one of the rape myths that holds the woman responsible for the act of rape. Rape victims range from babies to aged women. Rapists select victims because they are available or vulnerable, not because of their clothing.

_____ 9. Male on male rape is even less reported than male/female rape.

TRUE. Both men and women may be the victims or perpetrators of sexual assault. Male victims seek help less often than women due to embarrassment, fear that they will not be taken seriously, and fear of homophobic responses. Most male-on-male rapes are committed by heterosexual men.

_____ 10. A person who has really been raped would report the assault immediately.

FALSE. In the *Rape in America* study, only 16% of rapes were reported to the police; 12% were reported within 24 hours of the rape; and 4% were reported more than 24 hours after the rape occurred. 84% of rapes were never reported.

Victims have many reasons for not reporting the rape to the police. These include the consequences of rape trauma syndrome, such as denial or suppression; fear of loss of privacy and public humiliation; fear of reprisal by the offender, his family and friends; and the perception that the police and the court system will be ineffective or insensitive.

_____ 11. Most nonstranger rapists are good candidates for traditional outpatient psychotherapy as an alternative to incarceration.

FALSE. Traditional, individual, insight-oriented counseling aims to make individuals feel good about themselves. The therapist is used to dealing with people who want to change and may be unaccustomed to the capacity for total denial that characterizes sex offenders. The result is that sex offenders treated with traditional psychotherapy by nonspecialists emerge even more rooted in denial and other thinking errors than when they began. Nonspecialized treatment

does not create victim empathy or teach the offender to understand his own cycle of deviance and how to stop himself when he begins to relapse into that pattern. It is essential that judges imposing treatment as a sentencing condition require specialized, rigorous sex offender treatment. Optimally, this treatment should be coupled with incarceration.

- _____ 12. Although rape victims suffer severe emotional trauma as a result of the rape, they usually recover within six months to a year.

FALSE. Rape victims experience devastating long-term mental health problems. In a study in Charleston, South Carolina, for example, 57% of rape victims experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and 16.5% had symptoms at the time of the study, which was an average of 15 years after the rape.

- _____ 13. When alcohol is involved in the alleged rape, women are perceived as having even less credibility than usual.

TRUE. There is a double standard concerning men's and women's use of alcohol. His drinking excuses him. Hers is held against her. Women who drink are often held responsible for men's behavior as well as their own. Moreover, nonstranger rapists often use alcohol deliberately and strategically to make their victims more vulnerable.

- _____ 14. Being raped by a stranger causes greater emotional trauma than being raped by someone you know.

FALSE. Rape by a nonstranger is often even **more** traumatic over the long term than stranger rape. The victim's trust in others and in her own judgment is destroyed, affecting her ability to form relationships of any kind at school, at work and in her personal life.

- _____ 15. The majority of nonstranger rapists are repeat offenders.

TRUE. The majority of sexual assaults are committed against someone the offender knows, and most offenders have multiple victims. Research indicates that the majority of nonstranger rapists are serial offenders who rape repeatedly. Many also engage in other forms of interpersonal violence, such as domestic violence and child abuse.

- _____ 16. It will be emotionally easier for a rape victim to testify if the trial date is at least a year after the rape.

FALSE. Delays in the court process can cause serious disruptions in victims' lives. The longer a trial date is postponed, the greater the emotional distress for the victim. Testifying in court reawakens painful feelings associated with the trauma and increases symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Adequate preparation by prosecutors and advocates and speedy trials diminish revictimization and increase the likelihood of the victim remaining in the legal process.

_____ 17. Real rape victims give completely consistent statements each time they recount the assault.

FALSE. Some rape victims forget all or parts of the assault or recount the assault differently with each retelling because of the effects of trauma on brain chemistry. Traumatic memories are actually created, stored and retrieved differently than non-traumatic memories. For this reason, someone who has experienced a traumatic event such as sexual assault will frequently have memories that are fragmented, out of sequence, and filled with gaps. Additionally, when people are traumatized, they frequently avoid stimuli associated with the trauma and can forget important aspects of the traumatic event. As stated in the DSM-IV, "The avoidance of reminders [of the trauma] may include amnesia for an important aspect of the traumatic event."

_____ 18. Victims of stranger rape are more likely to report the assault to the police than victims of nonstranger rape.

TRUE. A study of 1,000 rape cases seen at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital Rape Crisis Intervention Program found that 60% of stranger rape victims reported their rapes to the police, while only 30% of nonstranger rape victims reported to the police. Self-blame and guilt are higher in nonstranger rape victims and contribute to their reluctance to report to anyone. They perceive that they are less likely to be believed than victims of stranger rape.

_____ 19. A woman who asked the alleged rapist to use a condom was giving consent.

FALSE. A woman who asks her assailant to use a condom during the assault is not giving consent. It is not uncommon for victims who feel the rape is inevitable to ask their assailant to wear a condom to protect against HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

_____ 20. The term "rape" can be applied only if the victim struggles or yells, "No!"

FALSE. Physical resistance is not an element of the crime. Many victims do not offer physical resistance because they are frozen with fright, in a passive state called dissociation, or have made a strategic decision to acquiesce to avoid even more serious physical injury or death.