

# What's Your Plan?

by Kym Spell

At some point, every woman has felt unsafe when she is alone. With the rising crime rate, women across the country are becoming increasingly vulnerable. Tuesday night, Stringfield and Carroll Residence Halls' educational meeting focused on a subject every Meredith woman should be aware of—self defense.

The guest speaker was Connie Cwik from Citizens Against Crime, an organization that provides speakers for clubs, businesses, and other organizations. The speakers provide information on topics such as crime prevention, fire protection, and kids against crime.

Mrs. Cwik relayed practical self defense information to the participants. She told students to walk confidently and be aware of the people around them. Stay a safe distance (farther than "arm's reach") away from bushes, cars, alleys, and doorways. Use the buddy system when walking or jogging and change your route often. Mrs. Cwik recommended carrying a dependable tear gas spray in your hand as a visual deterrent.

When walking to your car, Mrs. Cwik recommended that you have your

keys ready before you leave the building. Look around. Check under, around, and inside your car before you unlock it. Lock all the doors immediately and park only in well lit areas. Keep your purse out of sight while driving and never give your house key to a parking attendant.

In the event that you are confronted, Mrs. Cwik stressed that your best weapon is your brain. Criminals count on your fear and panic. Try to outsmart him/her by having a ready plan.

Before physical contact is made, scream and yell "fire" to attract quick attention. Run toward people and light. Don't waste time, run! Put distance between you and the criminal.

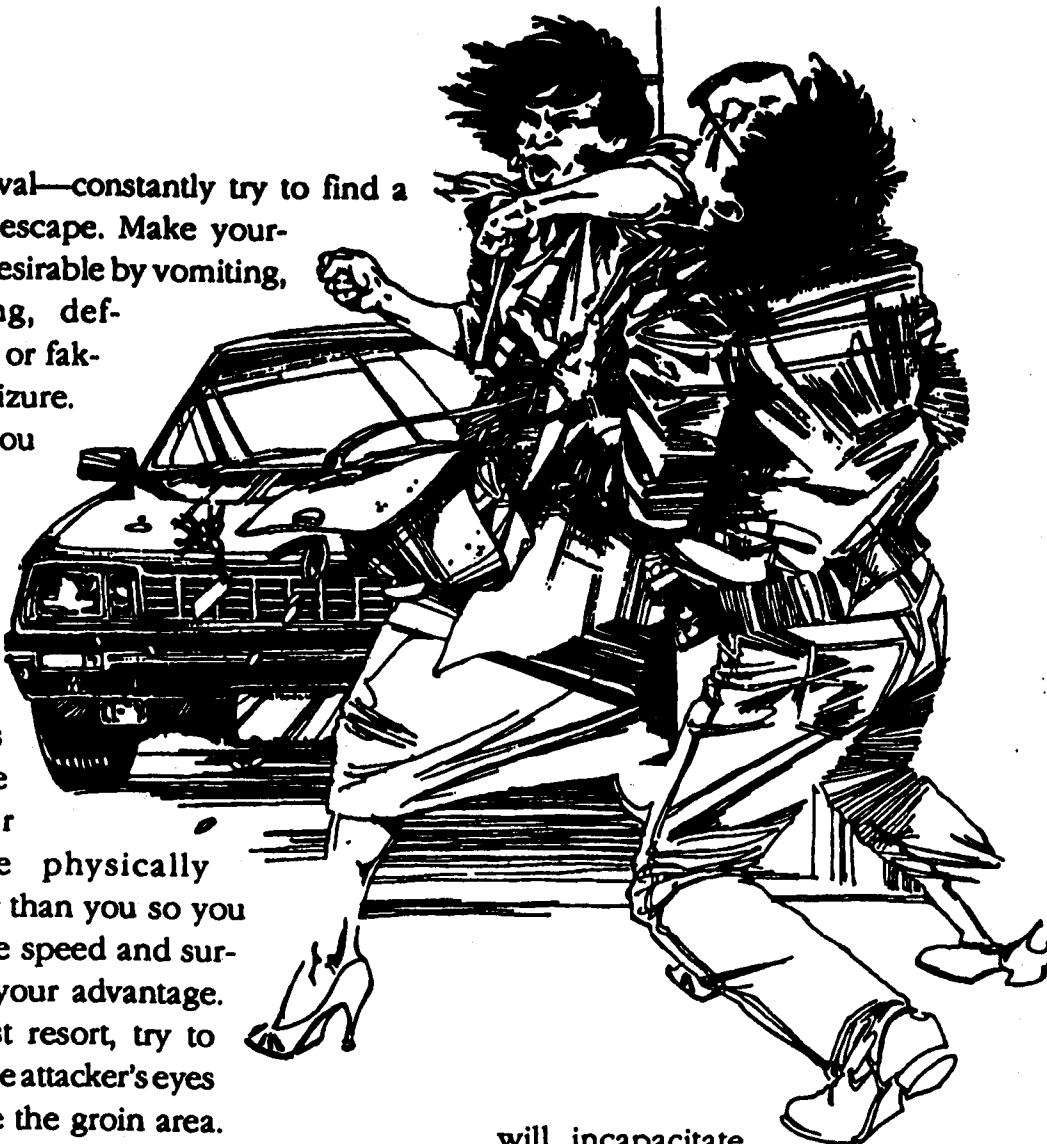
If physical contact is made, do your best to remain calm. Find out what the criminal wants. If they want money or jewelry, give it to them immediately. Don't turn a property crime into a violent crime.

If you are in a rape situation, try to get time on your side by doing the unexpected. Trust your instincts. If one tactic doesn't work, try another. Your chances of escape increase with each effort. Try to talk and act assertively. At all times, try to run and scream. Keep in mind that this may be your only chance

of survival—constantly try to find a way to escape. Make yourself undesirable by vomiting, urinating, defecating, or faking a seizure.

If you must fight the attacker, fight smart. Chances are the attacker will be physically stronger than you so you must use speed and surprise to your advantage. As a last resort, try to gouge the attacker's eyes or injure the groin area.

If you decide to carry a tear gas spray, Mrs. Cwik recommended that you choose one that has CS as its active ingredient and contains an ultraviolet dye to help police identify the suspect. Test the tear gas periodically and practice using it. Remember, all tear gasses are not the same. Be sure that your weapon



will incapacitate the attacker, not just anger them.

One of the major points Mrs. Cwik stressed was that students need to think about their own safety plan.

Be aware of your surroundings and take an active role in your own safety.

## Bite the Cheese

continued from page 3

late, we walked to the grocery store. We walked around the store looking at all of that food—all of that beautiful food just waiting to be eaten. This is where our final food connection was born. It so happened we were standing in front of the dairy counter, just admiring the cheeses, when something came over me. I grabbed a hunk of Muenster and bit it. Bit right through the packaging. Took a huge bite. My roomie bit it, too. We died laughing, purchased our margarine and macaroni and left giggling.

After a while hunger nags at you. You don't think logically. Not that we ever did think logically. Nonetheless hunger was calling us.

One night while sitting in our cubicle, my roommate looked towards me and said, "Let's go bite the cheese."

We carried on in this manner for the rest of the summer. Each time we went to bite the cheese we became more and more bold. One particular night we had split up in the store to eat from different sections. Quite a bit of time had passed and my roommate began looking for me. I was nowhere to be found. The next thing I knew my roommates legs

were right in front of me, eye level. You see, I was sitting on the floor behind the bakery counter. I softly called out to her. When she discovered my location, she joined me in a feast of chocolate chip cookies and ladyfingers.

I look back on that summer with a great deal of joy. It was fun but it was reality. We were so hungry we resorted to stealing food. We made a joke out of it, but it really wasn't funny. Had either of us had a lick of sense, we would have swallowed our pride and asked our parents for help.

There are millions of starving people in the world and some will resort to stealing. Some have no parents to run to or some have parents who are equally hungry. When I sit down to eat that huge Thanksgiving spread this Thursday, I will be thankful. Thankful for the few extra pounds I carry today. Thankful for the roof over my head and a reasonably high ceiling. I will also try to remember that someone I know may be hungry, and many somebodies I don't know will be hungry. I think I'll save them a bite of cheese!

Happy Thanksgiving!

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