

High school systems provokes timely response

Date-rape risks, reasons, rates in high school



Piephoff graphic

Students begin to take notice as date-rape skyrocketed in schools across the country, noting warning signs to watch out for in a volatile situation.

By Nicole Gibbs
Staff Writer

Of the 1807 students attending Grimsley High School, 981 are female. By the time these girls turn eighteen, three in twenty will have been raped—that is 147 sisters, friends, and favorite students.

Eighty-five percent of these violations, 125, will be date rapes. Date rape, also known as acquaintance rape, occurs when someone rapes another person he or she knows, usually on a date, hence the term “date rape.” Force may or may not be used, but if both parties do not give consent, technically a rape occurred.

“I think date rapes occur because some guys and girls have different perspectives of how far they should go on a date,” said sophomore Lauren Petty, “A girl might agree to go on a date with a guy, but he could get the wrong impression about what the girl wants to do.”

Different perspectives lead to controversy in many date rape cases. The accused will often claim that he or she did not use force, while the victim will argue that he or she did not give consent. Since the definition of consent varies, many accused rapists escape prosecution. In response to this, many institutions, such as colleges, have codes of conduct in which a definite “yes” must be given before sex can occur.

For many, however, date rape is not a question of different perspectives or lust.

“I don’t think [rape is] a ques-

tion of attraction because it’s so violent,” said sophomore Alex Ledford, “It seems like it wouldn’t be anything personal because the act is not a personal thing.”

Drugs play a large part in date rape, and ninety percent of rapes happen when either the assailant or victim has been drinking.

“I think that drugs can have an influence in girls being raped. Your judgment is impaired. It’s not necessarily that the guy put something in her drink, but that a girl gets drunk at a party and a guy decides to take advantage of her,” said Petty.

However, alcohol is not the only date rape drug. Rohypnol, which is ten times stronger than Valium, is by far the most popular date rape drug, and is known on the streets as “roofies,” “roachies,” “rophies,” and “the forget pill.” Usually it comes in a white, dime-size pill that dissolves easily in alcohol or soft drinks.

Once ingested unknowingly, Rohypnol leaves the victim open to suggestion and physically weak. While under the effects of the drug, victims form no memory of the events taking place, another factor that makes prosecuting rapists difficult. Though the high produced by Rohypnol lasts only two to eight hours, most often victims are left with only physical evidence and vague memories of the events that transpired the night before. If someone suspects that he or she unknowingly ingested Rohypnol, experts suggest seeing a doctor immediately for blood testing.

Rohypnol is used legally in many countries outside of the United States before surgery and as a treatment for insomnia. However, the widespread abuse of Rohypnol within the United States prompted the drug manufacturer of Rohypnol, Hoffmann—LaRoche & Co., of Basel, Switzerland, to al-

ter their drug, making it more noticeable when added to beverages. Now a drink with Rohypnol added will turn cloudy blue and clumps will form; some victims report a slightly bitter taste in drug-laced beverages. Still, the best way to avoid falling victim to a date rape drug is not to accept drinks from strangers and never to leave one’s drink unattended.

Falling far short of the popularity that Rohypnol enjoys, gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is still the second most popular date rape drug. Also known as “easy lady” or “liquid ecstasy,” GHB produces effects similar to Rohypnol.

As varied as the slang terms for date rape drugs are the means for coping with such a traumatic experience. While personal preferences for dealing with the feelings following a rape vary, one common thread appears throughout the aftermath of a rape. Contrary to the reputed communicative behavior of females, less than thirty percent of rape victims come forward; part of the problem may be that less than seventy percent perceive their experience as rape.

“I think most people would probably keep it to themselves; they’re scared and embarrassed,” said Ledford, “You would feel really worthless afterwards.”

Combined with the feelings of embarrassment and the memory impairing effects of date rape drugs, the prosecution rate of rapists is extremely low. Assuming that the 147 girls at Grimsley who were theoretically raped were violated by different men, only one or two would ever be prosecuted—one percent.

With knowledge and support from family and friends, victims can fight back.

“I think it’s important for girls to be aware of what can happen,” said Petty.

Potential victims in high school

“Since the program has started, I believe that there have been no incidences on campus. Guys are really getting the message that girls know what they are doing, and shouldn’t be reckoned with.”

-Sergeant D.W. Perdue,
UNCG RAD
instructor

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Although the prestige of the RAD program is widely known and

acknowledged, there are other programs through numerous different organizations that teach self-defense skills. Senior Julie Koontz took a baby-sitting safety course, which provided self-defense training and tactics, given through the local Red Cross.

“I have never had to use self defense, but I have taken a course to help prepare myself for such a situation. Now, I am more aware of my surroundings when I am by myself,” said Koontz.

Many Grimsley students agree that women should have training in self-defense tactics and the basic knowledge of what to do in uncomfortable situations. Whether it is on vacation, in the work place, or walking on a school campus, a situation can arise where having the basic skills and background could be the difference between life and death.

Sophomore Allison Edwards

said, “I think learning self defense is a must, especially if you are a girl, and if you have a job that causes you to work late nights. You don’t know what’s out there, and it’s probably better if you’re prepared rather than having no clue as to what to do if you get in a bad situation, it could possibly save your life.”

Want to find out more? Contact Officer Sue Stroud, and the rest of the Greensboro Police Department at: UNCG Police & Public Safety, 996 Spring Garden Street, Greensboro, NC 27413. EMERGENCY (336) 334-4444 Other (336) 334-5963 Fax (336) 334-5755

Or check out the website at:
<http://www.rad-systems.com>

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