

# Rape victims afforded improving treatment

by Jim Roberts  
News Editor

Increased local attention to the problem of rape has led to the proliferation of services for rape victims here and an improvement in the treatment afforded them. In fact the time has finally come when rape victims are treated as victims of a crime and not criminals themselves. At least in Chapel Hill.

The Chapel Hill/Carrboro Rape Crisis Center, the North Carolina Memorial Hospital rape crisis service and a campus security chief who values the welfare of the victim over the apprehension of the rapist have made life a good deal easier for victims of an assault.

"Chapel Hill is marvelous," Chapel Hill/Carrboro crisis center coordinator Judith Kraines said. "The police are really trying to make it a rape-free place."

Kraines' enthusiasm concerning the town's attitude toward the treatment of rape victims is not, however, reflected in the number of rapes reported to the authorities. She estimated that between one-quarter and one-tenth of all rapes

are reported to the police.

Miriam Slifkin, founder of the rape crisis center, attributed the silence of most rape victims to the stigma once attached to women who have been raped.

"A lot of women feel ashamed at having been raped," she said. "Even though something has been done against them, they still feel ashamed. A lot of women are brought up with the myth that 'Nice girls don't get raped.'"

Slifkin also said some women fear the treatment they will receive from the police if they report the assault. But these fears are mostly unfounded in Chapel Hill today, she said. The Chapel Hill police, the Carrboro police and the campus police all allow rape crisis counselors to accompany the victims during interrogation. A counselor's presence is even encouraged by the Carrboro Police Department.

Victims who go to the rape crisis center are not required to report the assault to the police although the counselors do encourage it. "Rapists are usually repeaters, especially in Chapel Hill," Kraines said. By providing the police with information about an assault, the woman is helping to prevent

another incident, she said.

Despite the center's concern with reporting the crime to the authorities, the incidence of rapes reported to the University Department of Security Services has decreased from four during the '73-'74 fiscal year to zero during the '74-'75 fiscal year.

Security services director Ted Marvin said the decrease does not necessarily represent a decrease in the number of actual rapes on campus. "Young people may be turned off by the criminal justice system, so it would not be in their interest to report rapes."

As in most all crimes, "there is a hell of a gap between what's happening and what's being reported," he said.

If a woman has been raped on campus and does report the crime to the campus police, her welfare is the department's first priority. Marvin said. "The victim is not forgotten. Rape crisis counselors provide a good countercheck to assure her that the officers don't get out of line."

Marvin said the department's second priority is identification and apprehension of the rapist.

Victims who call the 24-hour crisis line (967-RAPE) will reach a

switchboard operator who will contact a crisis counselor. The crisis counselor then calls the victim to determine if the woman is in a safe place and if she needs emergency help.

"We try to give the woman the feeling that she is secure, to foster the sense of stability," Kraines said. "Our main concern is to make her life more comfortable."

Another major concern of the crisis counselors is to get medical attention for the victim. "The incidence of VD in rape cases is incredibly high," Kraines said.

"We also urge the woman to get medical assistance so that evidence can be collected." She stressed that obtaining evidence of the crime early is necessary should the victim choose to prosecute a suspect.

The Chapel Hill/Carrboro crisis center's work does not end with helping the rape victim through the initial shock of an attack. Counselors are always available if the memory of the rape comes back to haunt her, Kraines said. "We can stay with a woman as long as she wants."

"Our counselors will also accompany a woman to the trial if she decides to prosecute," said Slifkin who currently

serves as a crisis counselor. "When a victim is on the stand, the defense attorney will try to break her down. A rape victim has to prove that what she says is true. We do give her quite a bit of moral support."

Rape crisis counselors are not professional counselors, but they are trained extensively by professionals, Slifkin said. "A number of our people are actually rape victims themselves. These people have a greater understanding of what victims go through."

The center receives approximately two calls a month, although the number of calls peaks in mid-March and late August. Kraines said she thinks the latter period is somewhat the result of students returning to Chapel Hill.

"People in town expect a lot of new people during Orientation." The peak "might also have something to do with the heat of the summer," she said. "This time of year, it's too hot to sit around and people are looking for something to do."

The campus security department has

## Rape presentation

Members of the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Rape Crisis center and the North Carolina Memorial Hospital rape service will present a slide show and presentation on rape and rape prevention at 4 p.m. Tuesday August 26, in room 204 of the Student Union. The slide show was produced in Chapel Hill for UNC students.

decided to combat the problem of rape, not by increasing the number of law enforcement officers on campus, but by increasing community awareness of the problem and increasing student confidence in the security department.

To accomplish this objective, the department is working closely with the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Rape Crisis Center to provide information to coeds about rape and about how to protect themselves against attack, security director Marvin said. The office has also worked with the Orientation Commission this past summer to inform new students of the problem.

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