Introduction to the Second Edition

In the dark cold days of February several weeks into the spring semester, a student of mine at the University of Pennsylvania, whom I’ll call Laurel, got high on a combination of LSD and beer before going to a fraternity party on campus in search of a good time. People at the party reported that during the course of the evening her behavior attracted quite a bit of attention as she danced provocatively to the beat of music only she could hear. She seemed disoriented and out of touch with her surroundings, oblivious to the various fraternity brothers who danced with her during the course of the evening. Some of the brothers spun her around until she was so dizzy she couldn’t find her way out of the room.

According to various eyewitness and hearsay accounts, after the party was over five or six of the brothers had sex with Laurel. When Anna, who had observed Laurel’s behavior at the party, heard the brothers bragging about their sexual escapade the next day, she concluded that Laurel had been raped. According to Anna, Laurel was incapable of consent due to her drunken-drugged condition. At a rally held to protest the event weeks later, after word got out on campus about what had happened, Carol Tracy, then director of Penn’s Women’s Center, referred to the 1983 legal definition of rape when she said:

The law is clear—if a woman does not consent and is forced to have sexual intercourse, it is rape; if a woman cannot consent, it is rape.

By the year 2000 the Pennsylvania rape statute spelled out the meaning of consent even more clearly than in 1983:

A person commits a felony of the first degree when he or she engages in sexual intercourse with a complainant:
1 By forcible compulsion.
2 By threat of forcible compulsion that would prevent resistance by a person of reasonable resolution.
3 Who is unconscious or where the person knows that the complainant is unaware that the sexual intercourse is occurring.
4 Where the person has substantially impaired the complainant’s power to appraise or control his or her conduct by administering or employing, without the knowledge of the complainant, drugs, intoxicants or other means for the purpose of preventing resistance.
5 Who suffers from a mental disability which renders the complainant incapable of consent.
6 Who is less than 13 years of age.

On many campuses, then and now, sex with a drunken, nearly comatose, or passed-out woman is not defined as rape by the male participants. One cannot understand campus rape without seeing it in the context of the sexual culture that breeds the behavior. Often the male leaders characterize their role as passive despite the fact that they stage scenarios which they call “hitting” or “riffing” on women. The passivity the men attribute to themselves is the prelude for blaming the victim later.

A woman who gets drunk is said to be “asking for it.” This is true despite the fact that fraternity brothers admit that the goal of their parties is “to get ‘em drunk and go for it” and that they make the women’s drinks “really strong to loosen up some of those inhibitions.” As a rule, getting women drunk as a prelude to “getting laid” is as far as it goes. However, in some cases the “go for it” attitude spills over into the acquaintance rape of an inebriated party guest who is unable to give informed consent. When a woman is particularly vulnerable, acquaintance rape turns into gang rape as a group of brothers take advantage of a woman who is clearly “out of it.”

In the case of Laurel the XYZ (a pseudonym for the fraternity) brothers claimed that she had lured them into a “gang bang” or “train,” which they described as an “express.” They thought of what had happened as a routine part of their “little sisters program,” something to be proud of. Reporting the party activities on a sheet posted on their bulletin board, they described what had happened as interviewing for the little sisters program. They proposed that the name for the program should be “little wenches,” and “the XYZ Express.”
The XYZ brothers never publicly admitted to wrongdoing. I concluded (as did the local DA) that what had occurred at the XYZ house was rape as the term was legally defined. This conclusion was based on my talks with Laurel and interviews with students who had observed her behavior at the party, as well as other evidence presented in these pages.

My purpose in conducting the research for this book was to understand the shadow sexual culture that ensnared a drunk, vulnerable woman who was out of control. I wanted to bring to the public eye an event that I learned was common on college campuses. My goal was to erase the divide between what is well known to many male college students but hidden from the public sphere of debate and action. In the aftermath of the incident, the brothers’ first instinct was to brag about what had happened, thinking it would increase their status on campus. When the fraternity faced a one-year expulsion from campus, the brothers claimed that it was common knowledge that such events took place frequently. Defending their actions in a lawsuit against the university, they testified that excessive drinking occurred not only on weekends but at all times. They also testified that it was “common for multiple consensual sexual intercourse to occur in one evening on the University campus approximately one to two times per month.”

Appalled at the glimpse of university life presented to her, the hearing judge, Lois Forer, asked whether there were rules regarding consumption of alcoholic beverages and having visits by members of the opposite sex at fraternities. She was told in response by the counsel for the plaintiff: “The only thing in the University Code of Conduct says members of the university community shall not act immorally, whatever that means.”

The meaning of “whatever that means” is the subject of this book. After some sixteen years, there is still a need to address this topic. The many cases reported since the book was published confirm the repetition of a common pattern up to the present. In 2003, reporting on the sexual assaults at the Air Force Academy, for example, USA Today wrote that it was “hardly alone in having problems with sexual assaults.” According to this article,

Harvard University has reported 50 forcible sex offenses on campus over the past three years. The Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., has had 11 midshipmen accused of indecent assault in the same period.
The U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., has investigated 15 cases over the same period. (USA Today, Kenworthy and O’Driscoll, March 13, 2003)

Recent cases have also been reported at Notre Dame (USA Today, May 24, 2002); Brigham Young University (Stephen Hunt, The Salt Lake Tribune, Aug. 10, 2005); the University of Colorado, Boulder (NOW, Feb. 19, 2004); Morehead State University (Campus Watch 2002, 2003); and the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga (Bill Poovey, Associated Press, Nov. 8, 2005). Charges of forcible rape brought in March 2006 by an exotic dancer involving three members of Duke University’s lacrosse team who were present at a team party attended by more than forty players received nationwide publicity, including front-page attention from the New York Times (New York Times, Drape and Bernstein, March 29, 2006—“Rape Allegation against Athletes Is Roiling Duke”).

These and other incidents in secondary schools and gangs demonstrate that the same underlying behavior occurs across the U.S. social spectrum, not just on college campuses. It is reported in elite and nonelite secondary schools and among street gangs. It is not restricted to whites, blacks, or other ethnic groups. American campus-style gang rapes also occur in other countries; most notable is the high-profile case reported at Waseda University in Tokyo. Between 2001 and 2003 a leader of a university club and other members used strong alcoholic drinks to intoxicate their victims to the point of unconsciousness, whereupon they were raped on various occasions by up to a dozen members of the club. The explanation given was that rape created solidarity among members and those who did not participate in the gang rapes were not members (Yumi Wijers-Hasegawa, The Japan Times, Nov. 3, 2004).

In this new Introduction I broaden the explanatory framework for understanding fraternity gang rape by putting the subject in its personal, social, and historical context. In the new Afterword I focus on what has and has not changed at the University of Pennsylvania and on other campuses since I wrote this book. Not wanting to convey the impression that all of Penn’s fraternities are rape prone, in the Afterword I include a profile of a rape-free fraternity. This profile was first written by two brothers who approached me in 1995 saying that they were organizing their fraternity according to rape-free values. In 2006 I talked
with two current members of this fraternity to determine whether the rape-free values were still in place.

When the book was originally published in 1990, I did not identify the University of Pennsylvania by name despite the fact that the local press had done so at the time of the incident in 1983. After publication, a book review in the *New York Times* divulged the name of the university and the name of the fraternity. I had not identified either because I did not want to put the onus on one campus or one fraternity for fear that both would be thought of as unique. My goal at the time was to draw attention to a sexual culture in which the line between consensual and nonconsensual sex is often blurred. Now that the incidence of acquaintance and gang rape on college campuses has been widely publicized and the identity of many campuses revealed, choosing to identify Penn is not a revelation, nor is the sexual culture described in this book unique to Penn’s fraternities.

When Duke University was confronted with allegations of forcible rape brought by one of the African American dancers hired for a party attended by over forty members of the lacrosse team, in a letter addressed to the university community Duke’s president, Richard H. Brodhead, instituted a mechanism for examining the campus sexual culture (*New York Times*, April 7, 2006). Although not all of the facts in the Duke case have yet come to light, enough is known of the context surrounding the alleged gang rape to suggest that the activity is similar to what I describe in these pages: male bonding and sexual dominance fueled by pornography, heavy drinking, and dehumanizing references to women as sexual objects. Regardless of the legal outcome of the alleged sexual acts reported in the Duke case, the culture revealed when the charges were made raises serious questions about the continuation of sexism and racism on campus. Most campus administrations know where the problems lie. The question is why no action is taken until charges such as those brought at Duke and those associated with the XYZ Express erupt into the media.

The sexual culture associated with the XYZ Express and the university’s response at the time yielded a picture of entrenched sexual inequality on a campus where fraternities had historically occupied a privileged place in campus social life. After prolonged self-examination and pressure from faculty and students, the policies and educational programs initiated some years later made Penn one of the earliest cam-
pus leaders in the anti-rape movement. In the Afterword I ask whether
and to what extent the sexual culture has changed in response to these
efforts. In answering this question I include the results of a student-con-
ducted examination of fraternity sexual culture conducted in the spring
of 2005. The evidence suggests a complex mix of continuity and change.

**WRITING FRATERNITY GANG RAPE**

I was an early member of the anti-rape movement that began in the late
1960s and took off with the publication of Susan Brownmiller’s land-
the social context of rape in a cross-cultural sample of ninety-five band
and tribal societies in order to question the then prevalent assumption
that rape was universal. By demonstrating variation in rape cross-cul-
turally, the findings broke the back of the then prevalent biological ar-

gument that all men will rape if given a chance (Sanday 1981).

Rape was rare in 47 percent of the societies studied and common in
18 percent of them. Most interesting about this study was the evidence
that the relative frequency of rape was significantly correlated with gen-
der roles and status. In the more rape-free societies there was evidence
of male-female integration in the affairs of everyday life, especially in
domestic activities. Women had higher status in these societies. In the
more rape-prone societies there was greater sexual segregation, male
social dominance, interpersonal violence, and the subordination of
women (Sanday 1981b, 2003).

Different social factors are also associated with rape-prone as op-
posed to rape-free fraternity environments. The isolation of fraternities
and athletic teams may enhance a sense of privilege and entitlement
that spills over into interpersonal violence against outsider males or vi-
olence against female party guests that takes the form of sexual abuse.
When I heard the story of what happened to Laurel, I was struck by
how the sexual activity was not unlike the rapes in rape-prone societies
in the band and tribal world in which men use rape to establish social
dominance.

Lest it be thought that all fraternities are rape-prone, it is important
to note that this is not the case. At the time of the XYZ Express there
were fraternities on campus known to treat women with respect. As
mentioned, I will have more to say about the rape-free mores in one of
the houses described to me in later years in order to demonstrate that sexual segregation is not necessarily a formula for disaster (although this fraternity was and still is leaning toward requesting coed status).

The striking similarity found in incidents of gang rape on many college campuses in the 1980s led to the book’s title, *Fraternity Gang Rape.* I did not use the word “fraternity” in the title to refer to fraternities generally as an institution. The phrase “fraternity gang rape” refers to bonding through sex. This does not mean that all fraternities engage in this activity. Nor does it mean that this kind of bonding is found only in fraternities. It is also commonly found in athletic teams and other male-segregated settings. I use the word “fraternity” in its broader sense to mean a group of persons associated by or as if by ties of brotherhood, or, any group or class of persons having common purposes and interests (Random House Unabridged Dictionary 1999).

The commonality is male bonding in sex acts in which the males involved aid and abet the activity. In party settings, boys examine the girls as they come in the door and play the host by plying them with drinks as they pick partners for dancing. One never knows when or if a date-rape drug is part of the mix. The success of the night, who “scored” and who didn’t, is discussed either at the end of the evening or the next day—or is written up. Once a girl has been sexually “snagged” at a party, she is forgotten because the object is always to score with new targets. The more new girls a brother can boast about, the higher his status. There is a thin line separating consensual sexual activity in this scenario from acquaintance rape. The next day the girl herself may not be sure what happened.

If, as sometimes happens, the behavior mushrooms into group sex, there is always the question of whether the girl consented. The boys may not even consider the possibility that she may have been too drunk to consent. They assume that by drinking she signaled her desire for sex. The woman involved is a tool, an object, the centerfold around which boys both test and demonstrate their power and heterosexual desire by performing for one another. They prove their manhood on a wounded girl who is unable to protest. Her body stands in for the object of desire in porno-staged acts of sexual intercourse that boys often watch together. She is the duck or the quail raised and put in place for the hunter. Who she is doesn’t matter and she is quickly forgotten after it’s all over—sloughed off like a used condom. The event operates to glue the male group as a unified entity; it establishes fraternal bonding
and helps boys to make the transition to their vision of a powerful manhood—in unity against women, one against the world. The patriarchal bonding functions a little like bonding in organized-crime circles, generating a sense of family and establishing mutual aid connections that will last a lifetime.

REACTION TO FRATERNITY GANG RAPE

With its graphic description of abusive sexual behavior fueled by sexist attitudes, *Fraternity Gang Rape* exploded onto the campus scene and was widely reported upon in the media. I was invited to many campuses to raise student consciousness and to talk to administrators about what could be done by way of prevention. I also appeared on numerous television programs and was interviewed by reporters and radio commentators across the country.

To this day I am called whenever a new incident is reported. Recently a CNN reporter called to ask about the case at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, involving six football players who were charged in November 2005 with taking turns raping a drunken student after a party. Vetting me for an appearance on CNN, this reporter asked with a tinge of outrage in her voice, “Why do things like this happen?” I was surprised because I had already given explanations to CNN several times after the book was published. I should not have assumed that what I said over fifteen years ago would be remembered today. The source of the problem is still not common knowledge. After I started to answer her question, I realized that she was only looking for a sound bite: one minute into my answer she got another call and hung up on me.

Around the same time, a local newspaper reporter called about another incident, this time at a Florida university. He asked the same question as the CNN reporter, adding, “Is it the pack mentality?” This phrase always carries with it the assumption that there is something evolutionary in the behavior. I pointed out that whatever might be evolutionary in sexual behavior, among humans it is shaped primarily by group values, sexual mores, and taboos. After all, man is not just an animal, but the premier culture-bearing being. (See Sanday 2003 for a response to the argument that rape is evolutionarily programmed.)
When I was called about the Duke case, the reporter asked me why the athletes involved engaged in such “pathological behavior.” I answered that what he was calling pathological was commonplace in the sexual culture of some young males, replete with the joking and bragging that was evident in the email written later by one of the lacrosse team players, along with the dehumanizing, racist language that reportedly occurred during the party. My point was that however pathological the behavior may be, it is necessary to understand its roots before effective change is possible.

We know (or should know) that rape is common in the United States, which is in all likelihood one of the most rape-prone societies in the world. According to the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), conducted from November 1995 to May 1996 by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 300,000 women and almost 93,000 men are raped annually. Researchers analyzing the survey results found differences in rape prevalence (defined as lifetime experience of rape) relating to age, gender, and race/ethnicity, as well as other factors such as whether victims were first raped as minors. In their report they concluded that “despite widespread public education, rape remains a largely underreported crime; and despite increased levels of research over the past few decades, significant gaps remain in understanding rape victimization” (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000, 2006).

The studies conducted by University of Arizona psychologist Mary Koss and her colleagues in the 1980s provided the first data on rape prevalence among college students (see Koss et al. 1987 and Warshaw 1988.) The data indicated that one of every four women on campus had been subjected to rape or attempted rape. These findings have been replicated in many studies since then. Between 13 percent and 25 percent of the participating females respond affirmatively to questions asking if they had ever been penetrated against their consent by a male who used force, threatened to use force, or took advantage of them when they were incapacitated with alcohol or other drugs (for a summary of these studies see Koss and Cook 1993:110; see also Sanday 1996:193, 251–255).

More recent studies, conducted in the late 1990s, report similar results. A nationally representative survey of 4,838 college students funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported
that 20 percent of college women, recalling their entire lifetime, said they had been raped (Brenner, McMahon, Warren, and Douglas 1999).

According to a report issued by the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics in December 2000 entitled “The Sexual Victimization of College Women,”

[...]college campuses host large concentrations of young women who are at greater risk for rape and other forms of sexual assault than women in the general population or in a comparable age group.

This study was based on a telephone survey of a randomly selected, national sample of 4,446 women attending a two- or four-year college or university during the fall of 1996. The questions were asked between February and May 1997. Responding to a question asking about sexual victimization incidents before 1996, the study found that about

1 in 10 college women said they had experienced a rape, while the same proportion stated that they were victims of an attempted rape. Almost the same proportion also had sexual intercourse or contact in which they were subject to threats of nonphysical punishment or promises of reward. Unwanted or uninvited sexual contacts were widespread, with more than one-third of the sample reporting these incidents. (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000:17)

IS RAPE BIOLOGICAL OR CULTURAL?

Anthropologists argue that while the capacity for sexual pleasure may be constitutional, human sexual behavior “is rather a sociological and cultural force than a mere bodily relation of two individuals” (Malinowski 1929: xxiii; see also Sanday 2003). This means that human sexuality sits precariously on the divide between individualized sensations and culturalized meanings, making it both preeminently social as well as physiological. As sexuality straddles two worlds—the biological and the social—the major question for research concerns the social purposes served by types of sexual
behavior. This question is answered by introducing the concept “sexual culture.”

Because human sexual behavior is a sociological and cultural force guided by public sexual cultures—such as reflected in pornography, the media, and religious education—we must begin by examining popular, historically based models for human sexual expression. Understanding how sexual behavior has been conceived at various times in our history uncovers trends that promote female sexual choice in some contexts and deter it in others.

Early Americans had a much different conceptualization of male and female sexuality than we have now. They came to these shores with beliefs characteristic of Western thought before the eighteenth century, reaching as far back as Aristotle and Galen, that men and women were basically alike physiologically speaking. Women had the same genitals as men, with the difference that the male organs were outside and the female organs were inside the body. The word “vagina” only entered the language around 1700. Before that the vagina was imagined as “an interior penis, the labia as foreskin, the uterus as scrotum, and the ovaries as testicles” (Laqueur 1990:4, 159; see also Sanday 1996:67).

Thomas Laqueur calls this the “one-sex model” (ibid.; see also Sanday 1996:67, 297). Although the two sexes might differ in such important characteristics as the amount of vital heat or in their capacity for moral perfection, by this model sex differences were a matter of degree, not of kind. Aristotle and Galen thought of women as colder and weaker than men. Women did not have sufficient heat to transform inner fluids into the more perfect form of semen. In conception women contributed only the material substance and the place of incubation, while men supplied “the form and the efficient cause.”

Over the two thousand years that this model ruled Western thought, it entailed certain dangers for those who valued sex differences. Men could turn into women and women into men just by associating with the opposite sex or by emulating the behavior of that sex. A penis could spring out from the girl who was too active. The interior balls of women who meddled too much in men’s affairs were thought to have slipped down to her loins. By consorting closely with women, men might lactate or lose their hardness, becoming more effeminate and like a woman (see Laqueur 1990:5–6, 7, 123, 125).

Today, we live in a sexual culture in which some boys are terrified of being viewed as effeminate by other boys who bully them merci-
Who wants to be called “nerdy,” a “dork,” or a “fag” at school? In most adolescent peer groups, a young male is expected to display his “hard-wired” maleness, lest he be thought of, or, perhaps, think of himself as homosexual. This is odd in light of the obvious homoeroticism of fraternity gang rape—unless one understands it as a ritual of “silencing the feminine,” by those subscribing to the one-sex model.

According to one-sex thinking, it was routine for both sexes to experience orgasm during conception. The seat of sexual pleasure for women has been located in the clitoris for centuries before Masters and Johnson rediscovered the clitoral orgasm. In the second century A.D., Galen wrote about the “raging desire” and the “great pleasure” that precedes “the exercise of the generative parts.” Although people debated which sex enjoyed “the pleasures of Venus more,” libido, as we call it today, had no gender then. Aristotle regarded the possibility of women conceiving without pleasure as highly unlikely. Renaldus Columbus, who claimed to have discovered the clitoris in 1559, just a half-century after the discovery of America by the more famous Christopher Columbus, took it upon himself to name the new discovery the “female penis.” He referred to the organ as “the seat of woman’s delight” and said that when it was touched it became a “little harder,” and “oblong to such a degree that it shows itself as a sort of male member.” Later, in the seventeenth century, an English midwife likened both the vagina and clitoris to the penis, giving women two penises, so to speak. One was inverted, creating a passage for the male penis, and the other, the clitoris, stood and fell just like the male organ, making women “lustful” as well as giving them “delight in copulation” (see Laqueur 1990:43, 48, 64–65).

Colonial New England appears to have enjoyed a low incidence of rape. A woman’s “no” meant something in Puritan New England. Despite the current definition of “puritanism” that emphasizes prudery, it was the only time in our history when males and females as a group were thought to have the same sexual appetite. Sexual desire was conceived of as explosive and in need of a vent for both sexes. It is also true that the laws of the colonies kept passion in check, forbidding “fornication” outside of marriage. Within marriage sexual passion was encouraged. Women married to an impotent husband could sue for divorce on those grounds alone. If a woman was raped, community officials tended to believe her because of the belief that a woman would have no
reason to lie. If she said “no,” a man was more likely to desist from making sexual advances (Sanday 1996:66–81).

The birth of the nation saw the flowering of the cult of “true womanhood” and a radical change in the conception of female sexuality. While the conception of male sexuality remained the same, the conception of female sexuality became dualistic: women were either pure or promiscuous, and sexuality was either private and marital or public and prostituted. While males were expected to be as lustful as ever, proper females bore the burden of giving the new nation a semblance of respectability. At a time when male licentiousness in the cities was well known and poor women often turned to prostitution as their only source of income, chastity became the dominant symbol of a polite, refined America.

True womanhood gave women of means moral superiority, but its definition robbed them of a sexual appetite. When these women reached beyond the feminine sphere of the home and entered the arena of public debate to take up abolition, temperance, social purity, and the women’s rights movement, they wore true womanhood like a chastity belt to protect themselves from the discourse of public sexuality that demeaned and subordinated all women to the demands of male sexuality (Sanday 1996:82–99).

In the public domain of nineteenth-century sexual culture, the expansion of the culture of pornography and prostitution deepened belief in the inherent lustfulness of men and their female companions in the bawdy houses of the times. Public women served men, while private women, mothers and wives, nurtured their moral backbone. In the public domain, any woman who disagreed too openly with a man—such as in rape cases—was automatically subject to the suspicion of having “asked for it,” of being inherently lustful like her sister the prostitute. In the courtroom, a woman’s past was examined for evidence of prior lustful acts on the grounds that, once “fallen,” a woman was always ready for sex. The complainant’s credibility might also be impeached by suggesting she was a false accuser, a scorned or vindictive woman. The tenacity of these suspicions is seen in the legal ruling of the nineteenth century that complainants had to provide evidence of having resisted to the utmost (Sanday 1996:100–120).

As the nineteenth-century discourse on women’s rights expanded, a group of women began a campaign of sexual politics. Activist women
(the term “feminist” had not yet been adopted in American sexual discourse) argued for more sexual autonomy and started a sex-rights campaign to reinstall the right to female lust. In true backlash fashion, the science of sexology was born at this time and ushered in another trend in American sexual discourse. The new sexual scientists posited a dualistic model based on man’s biologically based aggression and woman’s lustful sexual passivity. This was a dualistic sexual model with a difference. While lust was common to both sexes, the sexes split along the active-passive gradient.

Basing his position on Darwinian thought, Havelock Ellis, one of the founders of the American sexology movement, glorified male sexual aggression as a biological, evolutionary necessity. As women rediscovered lust, to ensure female sexual subordination Ellis and later Freud defined the female sex drive as inherently passive and responsive to forceful male seduction—even rape. Freud defined the sex instinct as a basic biological drive, which in its active form was masculine and in its passive form was feminine. Thus, these men returned the sex drive to women with the restriction that the proper female was to be a sexually passive, but now willing, recipient of male passion.

The new version of the true woman still said No when she meant Yes, not because of moral superiority but in obedience to her alleged biological desire to be dominated. Under her demur demeanor, however, Freud assumed the raging fires of desire still lurked in the female breast, giving her an overactive sexual imagination that sometimes led to false accusations of rape. Thus, Freud created a new version of the lustful female false accuser. Whereas in the nineteenth century the woman who cried rape was “fallen,” in the early twentieth she was a hysteric.

These ideas influenced rape law through the most important and widely cited legal treatise on rape of the twentieth century penned by the noted jurist John Henry Wigmore. Using Freudian terminology, Wigmore cautioned the legal establishment to beware of the female hysterical and the pathological liar and advised that all rape complainants be examined by a psychiatrist for nefarious complexes of a Freudian nature. Predictably, those few rape cases that were prosecuted often ended in acquittal (Sanday 1996:121–139).

The sexual truisms of the two-sex model outlined above functioned to maintain a community of males in opposition to and superior over females. Although some of the details of the discourse changed during
the twentieth century, its ability to maintain male bonding and male dominance was unaffected until feminists began to challenge the underlying gender inequity. The discourse of “No means Yes,” which in the third sexual revolution was transformed to “No means No,” can be traced back to the nineteenth-century cult of true womanhood and to the Freudian concept of female sexual passivity. At that time, to preserve her reputation and to show that she is not an aggressive hussy, a woman had to say No so that a man could take pride in his seduction and assure himself that she is not “loose.” Turning a No into a Yes by getting a girl drunk, slipping her a “date rape pill,” or using aggressive seduction was a common practice on college campuses when I wrote *Fraternity Gang Rape*.

**SEXUAL REVOLUTIONS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

The sexual ideologies described above were associated with three revolutions for change in the twentieth century. By revolution I refer to a social movement led by high-profile individuals interested in promoting certain gender-based sex rights and privileges. *Fraternity Gang Rape* grew out of the third revolution inspired by late-1960s feminism.

The first sexual revolution began in the late nineteenth century and was waged by a few outspoken women who objected to the restrictions on their sex lives imposed by the social-purity movement earlier in the century. They talked about the “naturalness of female sexual desire” and said that women had the “right” to a “frank enjoyment of the sensuous side of the sex-relation.” A group of women living in Greenwich Village in the early decades of the twentieth century were the first to call themselves feminists in reaction to women who were activists for Victorian sexual prudery. Claiming that the sex drive was as important to woman’s nature as to man’s, the first feminists argued for female “sex rights,” sexual freedom for women, and a single standard for both sexes (Sanday 1996:121–139).

Based on the theories of Ellis and Freud, the second revolution promoted unfettered sexual freedom for both sexes, with women expected to be passive but lustful for sex while men were the aggressors. The cultural superstructure for this revolution was laid by the novels of Henry Miller and D. H. Lawrence and by the work of Wilhelm Reich and Al-
Fred Kinsey. Their ideas were based on Freud’s theory of the libido and Havelock Ellis’s contention that male sexual aggression and female passivity were natural.

A somewhat different theory was expressed in Wilhelm Reich’s book *The Sexual Revolution* (1963). First published in German in the 1930s and in English in 1945, Reich argued that venting sexual energy through orgasm made for a better society. According to Reich, sexual energy had to be released in any way possible or society would crumble. He claimed that controlling sexual desire only produced “sex-negative” activities such as warfare, social oppression, and human anxiety, leading to other sex-negative social expressions. Alfred Kinsey’s famous studies of male and female sexuality were both based on Reich’s theories. Like Reich, Kinsey believed that the more orgasms people had, the better off they would be.

Kinsey was the first of America’s great sexual entrepreneurs. Unlike the others who came after him, such as Hugh Hefner and Larry Flynn, Kinsey did not build a money-making sex industry. He only laid its scientific and moral foundation by suggesting that multiple orgasms was a good thing and that human sexual behavior was no different from animal sexual behavior. Kinsey writes with approval about a man he interviewed who reported having thirty orgasms a week for thirty years. Kinsey’s only allusion to sexual abuse was to write disdainfully of an incident in which an old man was put in jail because he sought release with little girls. According to Kinsey, people should have shown more sympathy for this man’s natural need.

The sexual entrepreneurs changed the American sexual culture in dramatic ways, promoting pornography as big business and leading to a tremendous increase in reported rape rates. Between 1935 and 1956, the time when Reich and Kinsey were the most popular, arrest rates for rape nearly doubled, as did the rates for other sexual offenses, while those for prostitution fell by two-thirds. *Playboy* got its start in the 1950s with Hugh Hefner declaring his undying gratitude to Reich and Kinsey. Together Reich, Kinsey, Miller, Lawrence, and eventually writer Norman Mailer reaffirmed the Social Darwinist notion that male sexual aggression was natural, that “boys will be boys,” a mantra that acts as a defense for gang rape in middle-class environments.

The basic message of the 1950s and 1960s from literature, science, and popular culture was that masculinity should be defined primarily in aggressive and sexual terms. Once denied a readership in the United
States because of obscenity laws banning the publication of their books, Henry Miller and D. H. Lawrence were widely read during the 1950s. In their novels the hero is the potent, virile male, who, like an animal, takes his woman without asking. The male is presented as all potency—the active agent in sex—while the woman is presented as the passive receptor whose sexual desire is sparked by the male’s overpowering manhood (Sanday 1996:140–160).

**MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE MORES OF THE SECOND SEXUAL REVOLUTION**

Since sexual revolutions tend to come in reaction to what has gone before, it is helpful to summarize my experience of the second revolution which led me to join with others in seeking sexual equity through the third sexual revolution. In the sexual culture of my teenage years—true to the two-sex active-passive model—a woman was thought to communicate her sexual desire wordlessly by the way she looked at a man or by the way she dressed. I had my first lesson in the requirement that woman waits and man proposes when I was thirteen. I was in the eighth grade and invited a fellow student (in the ninth grade) to a square dance in the park. We had a nice time and went out a few more times. Nothing much happened on these dates. Looking back on it, I realize that the boy I idolized was simply unable to relate to me as a human being as opposed to a sex object. I projected onto him my hopes for companionship not realizing that he was tied up in knots by his sense of masculine vulnerability.

One day when he saw me at our church gym, this boy invited me to play basketball with him and his friends. During this activity, which seemed to me innocent, his friends got me into a corner. The leader in the group, who was the oldest and biggest, the one the other boys looked up to, took the ball and approached me menacingly, as if I was the basket. Terrified by the looks on the faces of the boys and the stillness in the room, I ducked under their outstretched arms and ran, without looking back, all the way home. Later I learned that the boy whom I idolized as my first date told his buddies I was “hot” for him because it was I, not he, who asked for the first date. In terms of the boy sexual culture I encountered in the gym that day, my interest in him was de-
fined as “she wants it.” Because of my girlish (or he would have said not-so-girlish) aggression in asking him out, I was fodder for the boys’ sexual talk.

Within the context of this sexual culture, the male projects his own sexual tension on to the female, fetishizing her desire as being reducible to “wanting it.” I first heard the phrase “she wants it” at this time. For a long time I was perplexed about what the “it” I supposedly wanted was. Later, I learned that the it was the male member. Much later, after I had read the French theorist Jacques Lacan, I understood that the it in question was the signifier of the lack that all women are supposed to feel because they do not have a penis. In Fraternity Gang Rape I suggested that the presumption of the lack (or penis envy, as Freud called it) has nothing to do with psychosexual development but a great deal to do with socialization for male dominance and power in patriarchal societies. What Freud and Lacan described as a hardwired psychological problem experienced by all women was in reality a cultural doctrine that functioned to give men a stage on which to socialize one another for power. The it embodied (stood for) the male power which women were denied solely because they were female. Boys who buy the idea that only power counts in the adult male game are much more likely to think in terms of “she wants it,” because they know how much they themselves will be defined by power. These boys also assume that the closest most women will ever get to power is through sex, because it is mainly through sex that women have power over men. Thus, when anyone says “she wants it” they are talking more about a male-defined power game than about female desire.

For women of the late 1960s the sexual freedom of the second sexual revolution meant many things. An increasing number of young women liberated themselves from the idea that they had to save themselves for their husbands. They also began to think more in terms of give and take in sexual relationships. This was the period when women reclaimed their right to sexual pleasure. Women consulted one another and books about how to have an orgasm. Their male partners, on the other hand, were mostly concerned with “getting laid,” a euphemism for release of sexual tension. Both sexes were concerned with the mechanics of sex. With one difference. Women tended to look for sexual release in the security of a relationship, while men tended to look for sex wherever they could get it. Men used the new sexual freedom as a ploy to get women in bed. Women who didn’t rush into a man’s bedroom at
the first request were labeled frigid or lesbian. If she didn’t want it, it was allowable to coerce and cajole her either by verbal pressure, alcohol, or physical force.

Rather than leading to greater sexual freedom and peaceful relations as Reich had theorized, this kind of thinking was associated with an increase in the incidence of acquaintance rape. Beginning in the 1970s, scientifically designed surveys replicated the same statistic: one in four women on college campuses reported that they had experienced unwanted sex by the age of twenty-one (see summary of studies in Sando 1996:184–207). During the 1960s women found that their private experience of sexual abuse stood in sharp contrast to the civil rights rhetoric of the time. Talking to one another about their sexual experiences in consciousness-raising groups gave women the power and strength to start a separate women’s movement. This movement, of which I was a part, was the ground in which the third sexual revolution took root.

THE THIRD SEXUAL REVOLUTION

Today, few people realize that the feminism of the 1960s got its impetus mainly from women’s shared experience of sexual abuse. There is nothing like the experience of threatened or actual sexual abuse to impress the social meaning of male dominance permanently on the brain. When I saw the faces of those boys in the gym illuminated by the setting sun as they turned menacingly toward me, reaching out, pinning me against the wall wanting to have their way, the American dream of equality and freedom was smashed in my psyche. In a few seconds I went from human being to object—the deer they had lined up in their sights, the centerfold they were about to share, the glue that would bring them together in shared abuse. In that one split second the phrase liberty, equality, and fraternity for all took on an entirely different, male-defined meaning. Being made the object of shared male lust in such a grossly unequal situation, I lost all sense of myself as subject.

The sexual freedom encouraged by the work of Reich, Kinsey, Hefner, and Mailer et al. meant that although the women of the sixties were having sex in greater numbers, they were not seen as equal sexual partners with the enforceable right to say No. While the so-called sexual revolution together with easy access to birth control might have freed women to have sex, it was on male, not female, terms. Getting to-
gether in consciousness-raising sessions, women began to discover the
degree to which sexual expression for them was marked by either “giv-
ing in” or being forced. Few of them could say that they were in egal-
tarian sexual relationships characterized by mutual consent.

The discovery of the ubiquity of acquaintance rape led to a signifi-
cant lobbying effort in the early to mid-seventies that resulted in rape-
law reform in most of the states. “Earnest,” “sufficient,” or “utmost” re-
sistance was abolished as being necessary to indicate nonconsent in
most states. The legal reform was an attempt to equalize rape trials so
that fear of false accusers and examining a woman’s reputation no
longer played decisive roles.

The reform changed outmoded laws and practices that had re-
mained on the books since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
For example, in many states the death penalty for rape persisted up to
the 1960s, making convictions highly unlikely. Another holdover from
the seventeenth century was the practice of reading to the jury the pro-
defense cautions of the seventeenth-century English judge Sir Matthew
Hale. Defining rape as the “carnal knowledge of any woman above the
age of ten years against her will, and of a woman-child under the age of
ten with or against her will,” Hale warned juries that

    rape is a most detestable crime, and therefore ought severely and im-
partially to be punished with death; but it must be remembered that it
is an accusation easy to be made, hard to be proved, but harder to be
defended by the party accused, though innocent.

By giving semilegal status to the fear of the false accuser, Hale’s warn-
ing was read verbatim to jurors in many states until the 1970s, being re-
moved, for example, from the California code of criminal procedure
only in 1975 (Sanday 1996:58).

The innovation introduced by feminism to the American sexual cul-
ture was female sexual choice and affirmative consent. Women sought
to return a passion to women that was on a par with men. The role of
the clitoris was rediscovered and women rejected Ellis’s and Freud’s be-
lief that female passion needed to be passive to spark the fire of male
lust. The basic proposition was that “No means No” and that sexual
consent was to be established through discourse. Although articulated
in the 1970s, these ideas only began to reach the American public in the
1990s. Today, the anti-rape movement on many college campuses
teaches men and women the necessity of *affirmative verbal consent*. The latter development is the most significant change in American sexual discourse of the past three centuries. It brings us back to the one-sex model with a difference: the equivalence of sexual appetite it assumes for both sexes is now joined with a corresponding call for female sexual choice and sexual equality in all aspects of social life. In the Afterword, I call this the new sexual revolution.

**NOTES**

In this book, Professor Sanday explains the societal background that permits and, indeed, encourages male violence against women. All too often gang rape is perceived as a phenomenon of the underclass—the poor, deprived, and minorities. Sociologists, jurists, and political pundits look for the causes in poverty, racism, illiteracy, and the anomie of the young in the adult world. I, too, accepted these facile explanations in the many cases of gang rape over which I presided as a trial judge.

My initial acquaintance with fraternity gang rape also occurred in the court room. In this case no one had been arrested. The victim, instead of going to the police, had made a complaint to the university. This case is discussed extensively by Professor Sanday. I was amazed to learn that the attitudes, language, behavior, and literacy levels of these fraternity members are identical to those of young, underprivileged criminals. Both groups frequently engage in sexual behavior that others call gang rape. Both call it “playing train” or “pulling train” (one man follows after another). Both groups consider it a form of male bonding for which the female is merely an available instrument. Both may prepare themselves for this test of manhood by ingesting quantities of alcohol and fortifying themselves with drugs. Both consider this acceptable, indeed normal, conduct. Both are amazed to learn that such actions could be crimes. These fraternity brothers, like slum hoodlums, are often semiliterate and unable to present coherent and intelligible statements in their own defense even though they are high school graduates and students in good academic standing at elite universities. The difference between the two groups is that fraternity brothers are rarely, if ever, prosecuted for their conduct whereas slum youths are prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned.

There is a similarity of pattern in these incidents. The men are on their own “turf,” whether it be a part of a park, a shack, or a fraternity house. The identity of the woman is irrelevant. Anyone who happens to be at or near the premises will suffice. All the men drink a great deal of
liquor. Then, in the presence of the entire group, each has sex in turn with the female.

The participants are always part of a male gang. While individually they probably would not engage in such brutal and degrading conduct, when reinforced by their companions they exhibit no sense of what most men and women consider decency or compassion.

In one case tried before me, the girl was fourteen years old and lived in a public housing project. She was on her first date. He was a neighborhood boy, her classmate in junior high school. She thought they were going to a party. I learned in the course of the trial that each member of the gang was obligated in turn to provide a girl for the benefit of all the gang. The boys had a clubhouse, an old shed bizarrely furnished, which was regularly used for group sex.

In another case, the rapists were unemployed youths in their late teens or early twenties. They had taken over an abandoned house as their headquarters. On the afternoon of the gang rape tried before me, one of the group was chosen to go to the blood bank, sell his blood, and with the proceeds buy liquor for all. Another was designated to obtain a female, also to be shared by all. The woman in this case was a married, thirty-year-old nurse. She was lured to the apartment by a man she knew on the pretext that he would sell her a TV set cheap. She was held captive for three days and repeatedly raped. When all the men were extremely drunk, she managed to make her escape.

In yet another case the young men were all married buddies who had a weekly night out. It was their practice to go to the park. One of them would pick up a young girl and ask her to go with him for something to eat or to the movies. Instead, he would take her to a secluded area where his pals would be waiting and each would have sex with her in turn.

Another gang rape occurred in the back room of a supermarket. A store guard caught a young woman shoplifting and ordered her to follow him. She did so and discovered that instead of being charged with petty larceny, she was gang raped by the guard and his pals. After a few hours she was released. She promptly went to the police, who accompanied her to the supermarket and arrested her assailants.

In all these cases, as soon as the female victim was able to make her escape, she reported the incident to the police. After some persistence on the part of the victim, the police did investigate and make arrests. The accused men were brought to trial, convicted, and sentenced to
prison. In every instance the victim knew at least one of the rapists by name or nickname, and she knew where the crime had taken place. The men certainly should have known that they would be identified and apprehended. At trial, all the defendants admitted what they had done but insisted that they had not committed any crime. To them it was a customary form of amusement for normal males, which is how they saw themselves. And, of course, they blamed the victim. She “asked for it”; she should not have been where she was; she should not have complained; she wasn’t harmed.

The average men and women who sat on the juries in these cases had an entirely different perspective. They brought in guilty verdicts. And when the victim sued the rapists in civil court, as did the woman who was raped in the supermarket, that jury awarded her very substantial damages.

As a judge who has presided over the trials of many gang rapists, my perspective is focused on legal principles, remedies, and procedures. My knowledge is more limited than that of Professor Sanday. It is derived wholly from the evidence produced in court. She has had the benefit of conversations with some of the male participants in these incidents, the female victims, and other men and women on college campuses. There are some differences between college gang rapes and street gang rapes, particularly in the behavior of the victims. But the similarities are more striking.

Before I was assigned the case of the alleged gang rape described by Professor Sanday and began reading the literature, I did not realize that such behavior is a pervasive phenomenon in American society. Professor Sanday, with the skills and insights of an anthropologist, illuminates and explains the underlying social attitudes that give rise to and condone such acts. She suggests far-reaching, long-term solutions as well as short-term programs to prevent such conduct. I suggest immediate changes in legal procedures on campus. The conduct of the university in the case tried before me is a paradigm of what college administrators should not do.

In that case the fraternity was in court suing the university, which had suspended it. No action had been taken against the individuals involved. Following an outcry by campus coeds after the alleged rape was reported, the university made an inquiry and issued the suspension order. I used the word *alleged* because there was never a prosecution, and so the fact of the gang rape was never legally proved.
I was, under the law, obliged to set aside the order of suspension because the hearing held by the university was conducted without a semblance of due process: hearsay, rumor, and conjecture were admitted in evidence; even though there were dozens of eye witnesses, none was called to testify; and members of the university investigating staff sat on the hearing body. This most irregular procedure was followed even though counsel for the university had been consulted during the investigation and was present during the hearing.

At the hearing, counsel for the accused fraternity was not permitted to cross-examine any of the witnesses or to present oral testimony. I remedied the matter to the university to hold a proper hearing, make findings of fact, and enter an appropriate order.

The principal evidence on behalf of the fraternity consisted of a written statement that the members had prepared and offered into evidence. Not only was it ungrammatical and replete with misspellings but it was also garbled and incomprehensible. Two excerpts from the introduction read as follows:

Although there has [sic] been serious public allegations made against our fraternity we feel that they are gross exaggerations, malicious [sic] fabrications, and unsubstantiated judgements.

To try to judge such serious allegations and such subtle questions of consent and collective responsibility without a complete report, [sic] would be grossly unjust. Although the University’s investigation is willing to make conclusions about such subtle questions, this is not a significant statement about what occurred [sic], but rather a reflection on the process which the University and its investigators are willing to make such subtle judgments.

Following my Order, another hearing was held but no testimonial evidence was taken with respect to the charge of rape. Accordingly, the hearing officer, a law professor, found that the charge that the female victim was unable to consent to the multiple acts of intercourse was not proved. The fraternity was ordered suspended for six months. No action was taken against any of the individuals involved.

The president of the university issued a public statement in which he declared, inter alia, “Our deep concern for the woman involved in this matter remains as does our undertaking to help her.” She was, it is
reported, paid a substantial sum of money by the university. Whether buying off a victim who might have brought a civil suit against the university is a proper use of tax-exempt institutional funds was never publicly discussed. The university was satisfied with this resolution because the adverse publicity ceased. The alumni who are substantial contributors were mollified. The fraternity brothers were relieved that they would not be tried or punished. The women’s groups were outraged but impotent. And so the matter was closed.

An experienced judge does not expect perfect justice in the courtroom. Vindication of rights often becomes secondary to pragmatic considerations. Although I could appreciate the reasons for terminating the litigation, this case troubled me for many reasons.

The glimpse of university life disclosed was appalling. At first I assumed that the behavior of these fraternity brothers was anomalous. In every large institution, no matter how careful the selection process, there will be mistakes. Miscreants have found their way into the highest levels of government, the clergy, industry, and the arts, and therefore it is likely that academe will also have its share of wrongdoers. However, both the evidence in the case itself and reports from other campuses indicate that this kind of conduct, moral myopia, absence of rules, and low level of literacy is not uncommon.

During the hearing the fraternity brothers plaintively asked what rules of university conduct they had violated. I asked a number of questions about this matter. The transcript reads in part:

Is there any standard about consumption of alcoholic beverages? Are there any rules or regulations about having visits by members of the opposite sex? Are there any rules or regulations about anything like that? (snicker from the audience)

Counsel for the plaintiff: He says no, Your Honor. The only thing in the University Code of Conduct says members of the University community shall not act immaturely, whatever that means. Counsel for the University assents to these answers.

Further evidence in the case disclosed that excessive drinking on campus occurred not only on weekends but at all times. Female students regularly slept in fraternity houses. There was no privacy when sexual intercourse took place. According to the fraternity members, gang sex is a common practice on campus. Their proposed finding of
Fact No. 66, submitted to the hearing officer, reads as follows: “It is common for multiple consensual sexual intercourse to occur in one evening on the University campus approximately one to two times per month.” Of course, this may be treated as a self-serving statement by the fraternity members who defended themselves by saying, in effect, “We only did what everyone else was doing.” The fraternity’s definition of consensual sexual intercourse differs widely from the legal definition of consent, since the former takes no account of the circumstances in which the incident occurred.

Under the law, valid consent to an act, a contract, or a statement cannot be obtained if the party is coerced. Coercion need not be by physical force or threat of force or violence. The court looks at all of the circumstances surrounding the transaction to determine whether the party acted volitionally. When a legally arrested crime suspect is in the custody of the police, courts have held that the situation is inherently coercive and that statements given by the prisoner under such circumstances may not be received into evidence unless the individual has been told that he has a right to a lawyer and a right to remain silent, and that anything he says can and will be used against him. How much more coercive is the situation of a single female in the company of a half-dozen drunken males on their premises who demand that she engage in sex with all of them? There is no one to whom she can turn for protection. The circumstances are inherently coercive. But this issue was not addressed by the university hearing officer who dismissed the charge of gang rape.

A cursory review of the daily press and the literature dealing with higher education discloses some shocking facts. Professor Sanday cites the statistics on the percentage of college women who state that they have been raped. In *Coping with Crime on Campus*, Michael Clay Smith (1988) lists dozens of cases in which students and their parents have sued universities for crimes committed against them on campus. These cases are only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Most criminal acts by students are not reported to the police. They are quietly papered over within the college or university.

Many universities shrug off responsibility on the ground that fraternities and clubs are private organizations over which they have no control. They do, of course, have control over the students who could be expelled or suspended. In most cases, however, unless the offending students are criminally prosecuted, they are shielded from the conse-
quences of their misconduct. Even when death occurs, many institutions attempt to protect the miscreant students. In some communities the local police do not come onto the campus except at the invitation of the university.

In one case tried before me a university student was charged with burglary and theft. He admitted that he had broken into his girlfriend’s dormitory room and stolen her computer and her color TV. She was the last in a series of coeds whose expensive possessions he had stolen and fenced. These items included skis, watches, jewelry, typewriters, radios, and television sets. All the victims had complained to the university authorities. But nothing was recovered and no disciplinary action was taken against the thieving student.

He was a National Merit Scholarship winner who was on a full four-year scholarship and also received a stipend from the university. I convicted him and as a condition of probation ordered him to leave the university, get a job, repay the victims of his crimes, and also pay a stiff fine. The university protested that he was a promising student and should not be forced to give up his scholarship and a bright academic future. I replied that this young man was a criminal and that the university by its actions was condoning his crimes. There was no meeting of the minds. Under my sentence this young man cannot return to college until he pays these penalties in full. If at the termination of probation the university chooses to reward him with more scholarships, that is beyond my jurisdiction.

Similar extraordinarily tender concern is shown by many colleges and universities to their students who commit serious and inexcusable crimes. For example, fourteen Rutgers students who were charged in the drinking death of a fraternity pledge were permitted to plead guilty and accept a counseling program in lieu of any other penalty. Those who successfully complete the six-month program will have the charges removed from their record.

At Harvard, a resident in one of the teaching hospitals sexually assaulted several patients. Derek Bok, president of Harvard, writes, “Rather than discipline the culprit or insist upon appropriate psychiatric treatment, those in charge arranged for him to leave quietly and then sent letters of recommendation to other hospitals without mentioning the circumstances of his departure.” Bok recognized that this was wrong, but he ignored the right course of action: criminal prosecution. A criminal record might prevent the man from ever practicing
medicine, but why should a university protect one of its members from the legal consequences of criminal behavior and the penalties to which other less favored persons who commit crimes are exposed?

Willard Gaylin, in his book *The Killing of Bonnie Garland*, notes the concern for the criminal shown by the university. Bonnie Garland, an exemplary Yale student, was brutally murdered in her parents’ home by another Yale student. He was academically unsuccessful. Apparently he was her boyfriend and she had sought to terminate the relationship. Instead of recoiling in horror from such a crime, the university community—administration and faculty—as well as an order of Catholic priests gave aid and comfort and housing to the murderer. The victim’s father, himself a Yale alumnus, was understandably outraged.

Other parents of female students who have been crime victims have reacted by suing the colleges and universities. Some parents of students and prospective students have demanded information, hitherto concealed, with respect to campus crimes. For example, Pennsylvania has enacted a law requiring that such information be made available to students, prospective students, and their parents.

I do not believe that draconian prison sentences or the death penalty fulfill the aims of the proponents of such sentences. Few prisoners are reformed by their experiences in prison. Most street criminals get a graduate course in crime while in prison; many are raped by other inmates and abused by prison guards; few receive education or counseling. Impetuous young people who commit crimes in moments of rage or fear are seldom deterred by the thought that if they are caught the penalty will be severe. Even white collar criminals are not deterred from their carefully plotted crimes by the sentences imposed on others. Nonetheless, the credibility of the law and the concept of equal justice require that regardless of wealth and privilege, wrongdoers should be tried and convicted and some meaningful punishment should be imposed.

But even those most familiar with campus crime continue to view it as an in-house problem that can be solved within the college community. A naively benign solution, frequently expressed, proposes building community among students and encouraging them to report incidents of violence and rape. Such steps are necessary, but all too often universities do little, if anything, to discipline the offending students, and hardly ever are criminal offenses handed over to the police for criminal prosecution.
The exceptional position of members of the college community and their immunity from legal process has a long history dating to the establishment of universities in Europe in the twelfth century when the academic community consisted of a homogenous group of privileged males. This tradition was replicated in the United States and continued relatively unchanged for many years. The campus scene changed dramatically with the GI Bill of Rights and with the influx of women into universities that had been elite male institutions. Academic achievement and college board scores became more important in the admission process than old money and family connections. The turmoil of the 1960s, affirmative action, and student control of the curriculum accelerated the process of change. In the 1960s fraternities were viewed with suspicion, if not scorn.

In the 1980s, Reaganomics and the push for money and power have taken priority over the goals of public service, equality of opportunity, and intellectual inquiry. Fraternities have had a resurgence of popularity. They are probably the last bastion of male exclusivity and privilege on the campus. Fraternity life is again characterized by excessive drinking, idleness, and sexual liberties. But the females with whom these fraternity brothers indulge themselves are no longer exclusively “townies,” they are also classmates.

These young women and their parents do not view such incidents with benign indulgence or subscribe to the view that “boys will be boys” whose careers should not be blighted because of sexual misconduct. They see this solicitude for male student malefactors as blatant evidence of sexism.

Although 53% of students at American universities and colleges are females, only 10% of the presidents of these institutions are females. Apparently old-boy feelings of solidarity by college administrators operate to protect male students from the consequence of their misconduct at the expense of their female victims.

Derek Bok, writing in the May—June 1988 issue of *Harvard Magazine*, discusses the problems of ethics and the university. He recommends a “comprehensive program of moral education” on campuses consisting of these elements: courses in “applied ethics,” discussing and administering rules of student conduct, programs of community service, striving for high ethical standards in dealing with moral issues, and sending signals to the students that the university will support basic ethical norms. These proposals, although probably good in them-
selves, will not suffice to meet the problem. *Applied ethics* is a vague and novel term. As Bok himself recognizes, didactic courses in ethics have not been effective in the past, nor have strict codes of student conduct. I have little confidence that new nomenclature and the addition of supplemental discussions and explanations will make courses and codes of conduct more effective in the future unless enforced by severe sanctions. Mere discussion of the impropriety of gang rape is unlikely to be persuasive. Community service has little to do with the problem of ethics and crime on campus.

The strongest signal a university can send to its students that unethical and illegal conduct will not be tolerated is to take two simple measures: file criminal complaints and suspend or expel all members of the college community who violate the law or basic norms of decent behavior. This applies to groups such as fraternities as well as to individual students.

At present, American colleges and universities are failing to meet their obligations to the students and their parents. They do not provide a safe, secure environment. Professor Sanday shows with a wealth of horrifying detail the indecent acts of male bonding, the dehumanizing of young men, and the disregard of women as human beings that occur in an environment in which these men consider themselves beyond the strictures of law. And she shows that these are not innate biological traits of violence but learned social patterns that can be changed. Academe is entrusted with educating the brightest and best of the next generation not only for positions of leadership in science, the humanities, arts, society, and government, but also to be decent, law-abiding citizens of a democracy. So long as any university tolerates crime, vicious behavior, and dubious ethical standards, it betrays the students and the entire nation.

*Lois G. Forer*
Introduction to the First Edition

This book presents an anthropological case study and analysis of certain group rituals of male bonding on a college campus. In particular, this study is focused on a phenomenon called “pulling train.” According to a report issued by the Association of American Colleges in 1985, “pulling train,” or “gang banging” as it is also called, refers to a group of men lining up like train cars to take turns having sex with the same woman (Ehrhart and Sandler 1985, 2). This report labels “pulling train” as gang rape. Bernice Sandler, one of its authors, recently reported that she had found more than seventy-five documented cases of gang rape on college campuses in recent years (Atlanta Constitution, 7 June 1988). Sandler labeled these incidents gang rape because of the coercive nature of the sexual behavior. The incidents she and Julie K. Ehrhart described in their 1985 report display a common pattern. A vulnerable young woman, one who is seeking acceptance or who is high on drugs or alcohol, is taken to a room. She may or may not agree to have sex with one man. She then passes out, or is too weak or scared to protest, and a train of men have sex with her. Sometimes the young woman’s drinks are spiked without her knowledge, and when she is approached by several men in a locked room, she reacts with confusion and panic. Whether too weak to protest, frightened, or unconscious, as has been the case in quite a number of instances, anywhere from two to eleven or more men have sex with her. In some party invitations the possibility of such an occurrence is mentioned with playful allusions to “gang bang” or “pulling train” (Ehrhart and Sandler 1985, 1–2).

The reported incidents occurred at all kinds of institutions: “public, private, religiously affiliated, Ivy League, large and small” (ibid.). Most of the incidents occurred at fraternity parties, but some occurred in residence halls or in connection with college athletics. Incidents have also been reported in high schools. For example, in the spring of 1989 news reports described an incident involving the cocaptains of an elite suburban high school football team, who with three schoolmates were
charged with sexually assaulting a teenage “mentally handicapped” girl while at least eight other boys watched (Record (Hackensack, N.J.), 23 May 1989).

Just a few examples taken from the Ehrhart and Sandler report (1985, 1–2) are sufficient to demonstrate the coercive nature of the sexual behavior.

- The 17-year-old freshman woman went to the fraternity “little sister” rush party with two of her roommates. The roommates left early without her. She was trying to get a ride home when a fraternity brother told her he would take her home after the party ended. While she waited, two other fraternity members took her into a bedroom to “discuss little sister matters.” The door was closed and one of the brothers stood blocking the exit. They told her that in order to become a little sister (honorary member) she would have to have sex with a fraternity member. She was frightened, fearing they would physically harm her if she refused. She could see no escape. Each of the brothers had sex with her, as did a third who had been hiding in the room. During the next two hours a succession of men went into the room. There were never less than three men with her, sometimes more. After they let her go, a fraternity brother drove her home. He told her not to feel bad about the incident because another woman had also been “upstairs” earlier that night. (Large southern university)

- It was her first fraternity party. The beer flowed freely and she had much more to drink than she had planned. It was hot and crowded and the party spread out all over the house, so that when three men asked her to go upstairs, she went with them. They took her into a bedroom, locked the door and began to undress her. Groggy with alcohol, her feeble protests were ignored as the three men raped her. When they finished, they put her in the hallway, naked, locking her clothes in the bedroom. (Small eastern liberal arts college)

- A 19-year-old woman student was out on a date with her boyfriend and another couple. They were all drinking beer and after going back to the boyfriend’s dorm room, they smoked two marijuana cigarettes. The other couple left and the woman and her boyfriend had sex. The woman fell asleep and the next thing
she knew she awoke with a man she didn’t know on top of her trying to force her into having sex. A witness said the man was in the hall with two other men when the woman’s boyfriend came out of his room and invited them to have sex with his unconscious girlfriend. (Small midwestern college)

Although Ehrhart and Sandler boldly labeled the incidents they described as rape, few of the perpetrators were prosecuted. Generally speaking, the male participants are prosecuted and the victim is blamed for having placed herself in a compromising social situation where male adolescent hormones are known, as the saying goes, “to get out of hand.” For a number of reasons, people say, “She asked for it.” As the above examples from the Ehrhart and Sandler report suggest, the victim may be a vulnerable young woman who is seeking acceptance or who is weakened by the ingestion of drugs or alcohol. She may or may not agree to having sex with one man. If she has agreed to some sexual activity, the men assume that she has agreed to all sexual activity regardless of whether she is conscious or not. In the minds of the boys involved the sexual behavior is not rape. On many campuses this opinion is shared by a significant portion of the campus community.

In this book I apply the anthropological method to an investigation of the values, social expectations, and institutional practice encouraging “pulling train” on a college campus. Since the value of the anthropological method lies in its focus on particular actions rather than on large-sample surveys, I begin by reporting an incident that occurred in one setting—a college fraternity. However, information from other campuses where “trains” have been reported is also included to indicate that the sexual behavior I describe is widespread.

Professional ethics demands that anthropologists do not reveal the identity or location of the people they study. Therefore, none of the students mentioned in this study are referred to by his or her real names. Unfortunately, it is more difficult to conceal the identity of the location of the study because the case on which I focus was widely reported in the press. Thus, I wish to emphasize at the outset that the specific location is not relevant to the subject of this book. The kind of behavior this case illustrates appears to be widespread not only among fraternities but in many other exclusively male contexts at colleges and universities in the United States, such as organized sports. It or its equivalent is also found outside universities where men band together in clubs, work
groups, athletic teams, military units, and business conventions—in all the settings we associate with the term “stag party.” To help focus the reader’s attention on the issues, therefore, I shall refer to the university simply as U. and to the fraternity as XYZ.

I also wish to stress at the outset that the sexual discourse and practices I describe are associated with a small, although highly visible, subculture of male students. The reader should not assume that all college males or all fraternity brothers act in the manner described below. The tragedy of “pulling train” and other forms of sexual harassment on college campuses is that although a minority of men on campus may be involved in promoting or participating in the acts of sexual aggression, a large number of women are affected. Although few female students are gang raped, an alarming number of them (as many as 92 percent at one campus) report that they had “experienced at least one form of unwanted sexual attention and had reacted negatively to it” (Hughes and Sandler 1989). Additionally, news of just one incident of group sexual aggression against a lone college woman that goes unpunished and is accepted as standard practice can have an intimidating effect on large numbers of women students, making them feel insecure and unsafe in the college environment.

THE XYZ EXPRESS

I first learned about “pulling train” in 1983 from a student who was then enrolled in one of my classes. Laurel had been out of class for about two weeks. I noticed her absence and worried that she was getting behind on her work. When she came back to class she told me that she had been raped by five or six male students at a fraternity house after one of the fraternity’s weekly Thursday night parties. Later, I learned from others that Laurel was drunk on beer and had taken four hits of LSD before going to the party. According to the story Laurel told to a campus administrator, after the party she fell asleep in a first-floor room and when she awoke was undressed. One of the brothers dressed her and carried her upstairs, where she was raped by “guys” she did not know but said she could identify if photographs were available. She asked a few times for the men to get off her, but to no avail. According to her account, she was barely conscious and lacked the strength to push them off her.
There is no dispute that Laurel had a serious drinking and drug problem at the time of the party. People at the party told me that during the course of the evening she acted like someone who was “high,” and her behavior attracted quite a bit of attention. They described her as dancing provocatively to the beat of music only she could hear. She appeared disoriented and out of touch with what was happening. Various fraternity brothers occasionally danced with her, but she seemed oblivious to the person she was dancing with. Some of the brothers teased her by spinning her around in a room until she was so dizzy she couldn’t find her way out. At one point during the evening she fell down a flight of stairs. Later she was pulled by the brothers out of a circle dance, a customary fraternity ritual in which only brothers usually took part.

After the other partyers had gone home, the accounts of what happened next vary according to who tells the story. The differences of opinion do not betray a Rashomon effect as much as they reflect different definitions of a common sexual event. No one disputes that Laurel had sex with at least five or six male students, maybe more. When Anna, a friend of the XYZ brothers, saw Laurel the next day and heard the story from the brothers, her immediate conclusion was that they had raped Laurel. Anna based her conclusion on seeing Laurel’s behavior at the party and observing her the following day. It seemed to Anna that Laurel was incapable of consenting to sex, which is key for determining a charge of rape. Anna’s opinion was later confirmed by the Assistant District Attorney for Sex Crimes, who investigated but did not prosecute the case for reasons to be discussed later (see chapter 3).

The brothers claimed that Laurel had lured them into a “gang bang” or “train,” which they preferred to call an “express.” Their statements and actions during the days after the event seemed to indicate that they considered the event a routine part of their “little sisters program,” something to be proud of. Reporting the party activities on a sheet posted on their bulletin board in the spot where the house minutes are usually posted, Anna found the following statement, which she later showed me:

Things are looking up for the [XYZ] sisters program. A prospective leader for the group spent some time interviewing several [brothers] this past Thursday and Friday. Possible names for the little sisters include [XYZ] “little wenches” and “The [XYZ] express.”
The XYZ brothers never publicly admitted to wrongdoing. Although there was no criminal prosecution and conviction in this case, I concluded that what had occurred at the XYZ house was, in fact, rape, as the term is legally defined. This conclusion was based on my talk with Laurel and interviews with other students who had observed her behavior at the party, as well as other evidence presented in this book. Like Anna, I believe that Laurel was unable to give consent. Therefore, I will refer to the incident as “rape” instead of “alleged rape.”

PURPOSE AND GENERAL APPROACH

After Laurel reported the incident to me and other feminists on campus, a rally, sponsored by five campus women’s organizations, was held to protest violence against women. At that rally a number of us spoke about the kind of environment that encourages a climate of sexual exploitation. Carol Smith-Rosenberg, a feminist historian, challenged her colleagues to bring the issue of sexism into “the classroom for discussion within the frame of a liberal arts education and a community of scholars.” Carol Tracy, Director of the Women’s Center at the time, reminded us of the role campuses can play in social change. This book responds to these concerns and to the many others arising from the growing knowledge about the prevalence of coercive sexual behavior on college campuses. My purpose is to explore and analyze the sexual subculture that encourages and supports “pulling train.”

As an anthropologist I have studied the cross-cultural incidence of rape in tribal societies (see Sanday 1981a and 1981b) and have conducted intensive fieldwork in one society (located in Southeast Asia; see Sanday 1986, 1988, 1990a). This research falls within a long-standing theoretical tradition in anthropology that emphasizes the cultural construction of norms for sexual behavior. As Malinowski noted long ago, although the capacity for sexual pleasure may be constitutional, human sexual behavior “is rather a sociological and cultural force than a mere bodily relation of two individuals” (Malinowski 1929, xxiii. For more recent discussions by anthropologists of the cultural construction of sexual behavior see Vance 1984 and Caplan 1987).

Occurring frequently in some societies and rarely in others, rape in tribal societies is demonstrably part of a cultural configuration that includes interpersonal violence, male dominance, and sexual separation.
In these societies, as the Murphys (1974, 197) say of the Mundurucu, “Men . . . use the penis to dominate their women.” Such a configuration evolves in societies faced with depleting food resources, migration, or other factors contributing to a pervasive sense that the natural environment is out of control and that human beings are dependent on male efforts to control and harness destructive natural forces. It is significant that in societies where nature is held sacred, and the mother-child bond is respected as the primary and enduring social relationship, male sexual aggression is rare. On the basis of these and other differences between rape-prone and rape-free societies, I suggest that rape is not an integral part of male nature, but the means by which men programmed for violence and control use sexual aggression to display masculinity and to induct younger men into masculine roles (1981b).

SEX AND POWER ON CAMPUS

In this book I turn away from the societies I have studied in the past to investigate the values, social expectations, and institutional practices encouraging male sexual aggression in the environment in which I work: the university setting. In this setting, as in the others I have investigated, my research demonstrates that sexual aggression is the means by which some men display masculinity and induct younger men into masculine power roles. It will be useful for me to summarize the theoretical framework I have developed for understanding the meaning of “pulling train” before presenting this research.

Echoing the early conclusions of writers like Malinowski, many contemporary writers (see Weeks 1985 for examples) conceive of sexual behavior not as a “stubborn drive” but rather as “an especially dense transfer point for relations of power” (Foucault 1980, 103). Many feminist writers have commented on the relationship between sexual aggression and male dominance. This is a central theme in Susan Brownmiller’s treatment of rape (1975) and Andrea Dworkin’s (1987) discussion of intercourse. In one of the most extended theoretical and historical analyses of the relationship between sex and power, Michel Foucault argues that sexual expression is channeled by strategies of knowledge and power used for defining the nature of desire so as to deploy male and female bodies in certain ways. Foucault’s analysis is particularly relevant because he illustrates the degree to which sexual ex-
pression, although motivated by considerations of power, is communi-
cated and learned through discourse.

For purposes of analysis it is useful to distinguish between sexual
expression and sexuality. Sexual expression deploys polymorphous
sexual desire in a given social relationship; the desire is channeled by
strategies of knowledge and power. Sexuality, on the other hand, con-
sidered without regard to the social relationship in which it is ex-
pressed, can be defined as polymorphous desire, involving conscious
and unconscious fantasies and eliciting “a range of excitations and ac-
tivities that produce pleasure beyond the satisfaction of any basic phys-
iological need” (Mitchell 1982, 2). Sexuality is polymorphous because
“it arises from various sources, seeks satisfaction in many different
ways and makes use of many diverse objects for its aim of achieving
pleasure” (ibid.). Only with difficulty does polymorphous sexuality
move from being a drive with many component parts “to being what is
normally understood as sexuality, something which appears to be a uni-
ified instinct in which genitality predominates” (ibid.).

I suggest that “pulling train” is a form of sexual expression that is
defined as normal and natural (hence normative) by some men and
women. In the act of “pulling train” polymorphous sexuality is focused
primarily on the penis and, hence, is phallocentric. The sexual act is not
concerned with sexual gratification but with the deployment of the
penis as a concrete symbol of masculine social power and dominance.
The male sexual bonding evident in “pulling train” is a sexual expres-
sion and display of the power of the brotherhood to control and domi-
nate women. The discourse associated with acts of “pulling train” de-
defines this form of control and domination as part of normal male sexual
expression. Thus, this discourse operates as a strategy of knowledge
that sanctions the deployment of male power in acts of sexual aggr es-
sion.

Discourse is “a domain of language-use, a particular way of talking
(and writing and thinking)” (Belsey 1980, 5). We can speak of a phallo-
centric discourse, which like all discourse involves certain shared as-
sumptions, in this case concerning the nature of male sexual needs. Re-
lated to the phallocentric discourse is an ideology or a set of assump-
tions about the way things naturally are, in this case the way things are
and should be sexually. A phallocentric ideology cannot be separated
from phallocentric discourse and practice because the ideology is in-
scribed and represented in discourse and practice.
The ideology that promotes “pulling train” is seen in the discourse and practices associated with some parties on campus. Party invitations expressing this ideology depict a woman lying on a pool table, or in some other position suggestive of sexual submission. The hosts of the party promote behavior aimed at seduction. Seduction means plying women with alcohol or giving them drugs in order to “break down resistance.” A drunken woman is not defined as being in need of protection and help, but as “asking for it.” If the situation escalates into sexual activity, the brothers watch each other perform sexual acts and then brag about “getting laid.” The event is referred to as “drunken stupidity, women chasing, and all around silliness.” The drama enacted parodies the image of the gentleman. Its male participants brag about their masculinity and its female participants are degraded to the status of what the boys call “red meat” or “fish.” The whole scenario joins men in a no-holds-barred orgy of togetherness. The woman whose body facilitates all of this is sloughed off at the end like a used condom. She may be called a “nympho” or the men may believe that they seduced her—a practice known as “working a yes out”—through promises of becoming a little sister, by getting her drunk, by promising her love, or by some other means. Those men who object to this kind of behavior run the risk of being labeled “wimps” or, even worse in their eyes, “gays” or “faggots.”

The rationalization for this behavior illustrates a broader social ideology of male dominance. Both the brothers and many members of the broader community excuse the behavior by saying that “boys will be boys” and that if a woman gets into trouble it is because “she asked for it,” “she wanted it,” or “she deserved it.” The ideology inscribed in this discourse represents male sexuality as more natural and more explosive than female sexuality. This active, “naturally” explosive nature of male sexuality is expected to find an outlet either in the company of male friends or in the arms of prostitutes. In these contexts men are supposed to use women to satisfy explosive urges. The women who satisfy these urges are included as passive actors in the enactment of a sexual discourse where the male, but not the female, sexual instinct is characterized as an insatiable biological instinct and psychological need.

Men entice one another into the act of “pulling train” by implying that those who do not participate are unmanly or homosexual. This behavior is full of contradictions because the homoeroticism of “pulling train” seems obvious. A group of men watch each other having sex with
a woman who may be unconscious. One might well ask why the woman is even necessary for the sexual acts these men stage for one another. As fraternity practices described in this book suggest, the answer seems to lie in homophobia. One can suggest that in the act of “pulling train” the polymorphous sexuality of homophobic men is given a strictly heterosexual form.

*Polymorphous sexuality*, a term used by Freud to refer to diffuse sexual interests with multiple objects, means that men will experience desire for one another. However, homophobia creates a tension between polymorphous sexual desire and compulsory heterosexuality. This tension is resolved by “pulling train”: the brothers vent their interest in one another through the body of a woman. In the sociodrama that is enacted, the idea that heterosexual males are superior to women and to homosexuals is publicly expressed and probably subjectively absorbed. Thus, both homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality can be understood as strategies of knowledge and power centering on sex that support the social stratification of men according to sexual preference.

In group sex, homoerotic desire is simultaneously indulged, degraded, and extruded from the group. The fact that the woman involved is often unconscious highlights her status as a surrogate victim in a drama where the main agents are males interacting with one another. The victim embodies the sexual urges of the brothers; she is defined as “wanting it”—even though she may be unconscious during the event—so that the men can satisfy their urges for one another at her expense. By defining the victim as “wanting it,” the men convince themselves of their heterosexual prowess and delude themselves as to the real object of their lust. If they were to admit to the real object, they would give up their position in the male status hierarchy as superior, heterosexual males. The expulsion and degradation of the victim both brings a momentary end to urges that would divide the men and presents a social statement of phallic heterosexual dominance.

By blaming the victim for provoking their own sexual aggression, men control and define acceptable and unacceptable female sexual behavior through the agency of fear. The fear is that a woman who does not guard her behavior runs the risk of becoming the target of uncontrollable male sexual aggression. Thus, although women are ostensibly the controlling agent, it is fear of the imagined explosive nature of male sexuality that ultimately reigns for both sexes. This fear instills in some men and women consciousness of their sexual and social identities.
In sum, the phenomenon of “pulling train” has many meanings. In addition to those meanings that have been mentioned, it is a bonding device that can permanently change a young man’s understanding of masculinity. The bonding is accomplished by virtue of coparticipation in a “forbidden” act. As Ward Goodenough (1963) points out, sharing in the forbidden as part of initiation to a group is a powerful bonding device. For example, criminal gangs may require the initiate to perform a criminal act in order to be accepted as a member, an act that once performed is irrevocable. Participation in a “train” performs the same function of bonding the individual to the group and changing his subjectivity. Such bridge-burning acts of one kind or another are standard parts of ritualized identity-change procedures.

THE CONDITIONS PROMOTING “PULLING TRAIN”

We cannot assume that all entering college students have well-established sexual and social identities or ethical positions regarding sexual harassment and abuse. Recent research by psychologists on human subjectivity argues that subjectivity is dynamic and changes as individuals move through the life cycle (see chapter 8). The evidence presented here suggests that the masculine subjectivity of insecure males may be shaped, or at least reinforced, by experiences associated with male bonding at college.

For example, three fraternity initiation rituals are described in chapters 6 and 7 in which young men who admit to feelings of low self-esteem upon entering the college setting are forced to cleanse and purify themselves of the despised and dirty feminine, “nerdy,” “faggot” self bonded to their mothers. The ritual process in these cases humilates the pledges in order to break social and psychological bonds to parental authority and to establish new bonds to the brotherhood. The traumatic means employed to achieve these goals induces a state of consciousness that makes abuse of women a means to renew fraternal bonds and assert power as a brotherhood.

One of the most important social conditions promoting the act of “pulling train” has to do with the university’s response when particular incidents are reported. There is a widespread tendency on the part of college administrators to ignore or cover up reports of specific incidents. In protecting the male students involved, the school also protects
its image. Such a response only encourages a repetition of rape-prone party activities. The absence of a strong set of sanctions against abusive party sex on many campuses not only encourages incidents of gang rape but also helps explain the high incidence of sexual harassment and date rape at colleges, such as reported by Mary Koss and her colleagues (1987). Much of the material presented in this book helps to explain the mentality that makes sexual harassment and date rape so much a part of the college dating culture.

THE DEFINITION OF RAPE

A number of readers of drafts of this book have raised questions about the women I describe who agree to some sexual activity and then pass out while a group of brothers continue to have sex with them. These readers believe that there is complicity on the part of women who submit to the sexual demands of a few or who dress and act provocatively. It is important to stress here that in the state where the XYZ incident occurred, the law implies that regardless of a woman’s past sexual history or provocative behavior, when she says no and asks a man or men to stop, they are legally bound to stop all sexual activity. Additionally, the law states that if a woman is incapable of consent, any sexual activity with her is legally classified as rape.

Currently there seems to be widespread ignorance about the legal definition of rape. Many people believe that rape is sexual intercourse accomplished either by direct force or a threat of force. They do not understand that in most states rape applies also to sexual intercourse where the victim, by reason of unconsciousness, mental derangement or deficiency, retardation, or intoxication, is incapable of consent. To this we can add the points raised by Judge Forer in the Foreword. Legal consent to an act, a contract, or a statement cannot be obtained if the party is coerced. Coercion need not be accomplished by physical force or threat of force but may be inherent in the circumstances surrounding the transaction. The circumstances in which a single female is in the company of a half-dozen drunken males on their premises who demand that she engage in sex with them are inherently coercive. University administrators who permit the contexts in which these circumstances occur or who do not investigate charges stemming from the be-
behavior that takes place in these settings contribute to a rape-prone environment on college campuses.

SPECIFIC APPROACH AND METHOD

In keeping with my emphasis on ideology, discourse, and practice, as noted above, in the first part of this book I present the context—the ideology, discourse, and institutional setting—in which a specific incident of “pulling train” was defined as “no problem” by the men involved and lightly punished by the institution. The first section of the book is devoted to a description and analysis of what happened to Laurel and how the university administration responded. In addition to my conversations with university administrators about the incident, my understanding of the incident is based on my conversations with students who were at the party and with the assistant district attorney who investigated the case. I also talked extensively with journalist Mark Bowden, whose account of the incident appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine* (see Bowden 1983).

In order to achieve an understanding of the broader social context making “pulling train” an expectable part of sexual behavior for certain groups of men on campus, I trained students to interview men and women at parties and in fraternity houses. The interviewing took place during the course of two years. In all cases, with the agreement of the persons interviewed, conversations were tape recorded and the interviews transcribed. Additionally, several students wrote about their own experiences in fraternities, including the fraternity in which the incident occurred. The data I present are culled from these sources. The result is a unique documentation by students of a sexual subculture on a college campus. The social prevalence of the ideas and values reported by these students and reflected in their conversations is suggested by the fact that these same values and attitudes are repeated in the information derived from other campuses.

Another part of the book describes incidents that occurred on other campuses. I interviewed the victim of a gang rape that occurred on another campus and searched for reports of events in newspapers and magazines. I also gained access to the police report of a gang rape on still another campus. Additionally, I cite the nationwide study of sexual
experiences of college students conducted by Koss and her colleagues (see Koss et al. 1987). From this material, together with information I include on fraternity initiation rituals, one can conclude that the attitudes and behavior connected with “pulling train” are part of a nationwide sexual subculture.

This book is organized into two sections. In the first, I devote chapter 1 to describing the institutional contexts and the discourse that made the “XYZ Express” natural, seemingly expected, and fun to the perpetrators. In chapter 2 the story of the XYZ Express is told from the point of view of two female students who were very familiar with life at the XYZ house. These stories help us to understand the motivation of young women who get involved in fraternity party life. In chapter 3 I give an account of the aftermath of the XYZ incident, describing the reaction of the brothers, the legal implications of the incident, and the university administration’s reaction. In order to demonstrate that the XYZ Express is a national and not a local phenomenon, this section ends with a chapter describing cases on other, geographically distinct campuses. These cases demonstrate how some young women are unknowingly caught in the fraternity party net while pledging a sorority or because they have put their trust in female roommates or in fraternity brothers at a party. The complicity of other, usually more experienced, women in some incidents of gang rape indicates that the phenomenon is not necessarily restricted to men alone. Thus, it is misleading to assume that men are necessarily the only aggressors in these cases. Women who aid men in their search for victims are as responsible as the men who participate in the sexual behavior.

The next section of the book begins with a chapter examining the processes by which the discourse and practices of phallocentrism are communicated among male students: chapter 5 focuses on the sexual discourse of fraternity brothers in several houses. In their late night talk among themselves these brothers demean women as sex objects as they promote brotherly feeling among themselves. As they talk among themselves about a variety of topics—pornography, homosexuality, the XYZ incident—the brothers display an unwitting sense of their dominance over the women they invite to their parties and their right to exploit these women sexually. These points are illustrated by transcripts of conversations between fraternity brothers talking about “working a yes out” and “getting laid.” In their talk as well as at their parties these brothers use women and sex to rehearse the dominance and control ex-
pected of successful American men. It is interesting to note that in the
discussions reported here none of the brothers resist the dominant dis-
course. The unstated goal is agreement and fraternal unity. Talking
about sex and “working a yes out” unites men who might otherwise ex-
perience intense rivalry as they prepare themselves to enter the com-
petitive marketplace.

A sexist consciousness is stamped on the bodies and psyches of
pledges during some initiation rituals. Chapters 6 and 7 describe three
rituals drawn from several universities that illustrate the “truth games”
brothers may play to mold a new generation of pledges into a mascu-
line, brotherly image. One of the truth games is subjugation of the self
to the bonds of brotherhood in order to become a “brother” and thereby
a “man.” This game is played out in the abusive behavior of the ritual
that includes “killing the woman” and cleansing “the fag” in the
pledges. The humiliation, pain, and sheer physicality of these acts can
be interpreted as a radical resocialization, a physical brainwashing that
alters consciousness. The pledge who survives and accepts the abuse
earns the right to be a “true brother,” a true man, and to dominate the
next generation of pledges. We can speculate that, as is true of the sex-
ual abuse of children in the family, the physical abuse of pledges may
have lasting effects. At the least we must recognize that the abuse of
pledges in some fraternities on college campuses is a training ground
for an abusive and sexist subjectivity. This recognition is the subject of
chapter 8. A society that confuses masculinity with abuse can expect its
adult male members to act accordingly.

CONCLUSION

The material presented in this book is derived from interviews and ob-
servations in a few of the many fraternities at U. and on several other
campuses. The sexual aggression evident in these particular cases does
not mean that sexual aggression is restricted to fraternities or that all
fraternities indulge in sexual aggression. Sexist attitudes and the phal-
locentric mentality associated with “pulling train” have a long history
in Western society. For example, venting homoerotic desire in the gang
rape of women who are treated as male property is the subject of sev-
eral biblical stories. Susan Brownmiller describes instances of gang rape
by men in war and in street gangs. Male bonding that rejects women
and commodifies sex is evident in many other social contexts outside of universities. Thus, it would be wrong to place the blame solely on fraternities. However, it is a fact also that most of the reported incidents of “pulling train” on campus have been associated with fraternities.

Cross-cultural research demonstrates that whenever men build and give allegiance to a mystical, enduring, all-male social group, the disparagement of women is, invariably, an important ingredient of the mystical bond, and sexual aggression the means by which the bond is renewed (Sanday 1981b, 1986). As long as exclusive male clubs exist in a society that privileges men as a social category, we must recognize that collective sexual aggression provides a ready stage on which some men represent their social privilege and introduce adolescent boys to their future place in the status hierarchy.

Why has the sexual abuse of women and the humiliation of generations of pledges been tolerated for so long? The answer lies in a historical tendency to privilege male college students by failing to hold them accountable. Administrators protect young men by dissociating asocial behavior from the perpetrator and attributing it to something else. For example, one hears adult officials complaining about violence committed by fraternity brothers at the same time they condone the violence by saying that “things got out of hand” because of alcohol, adolescence, or some other version of “boys will be boys.” Refusing to take serious action against young offenders promotes the male privilege that led to the behavior in the first place. At some level, perhaps, administrators believe that by taking effective action to end all forms of abuse they deny young men a forum for training for masculinity. Where this is the case women students cannot possibly experience the same social opportunities or sense of belonging at college as their male peers, even though they spend the same amount of money for the privilege of attending. As colleges and universities face an increasing number of legal suits deriving from rape, murder, and the other forms of abuse reported in fraternities, athletic settings, and dorms, change is clearly imminent. This book is dedicated to the proposition that the direction of change must be based on an understanding of the multifaceted nature of the problem.
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Carol Tracy, who as Director of the Women’s Center worked for many years to combat sexism and violence against women on campus, was a constant source of inspiration. I dedicate this book to her and to Andrea Ploscowe and Meg Davis, students who showed uncommon courage in resisting the sexual exploitation of women on their respective campuses.

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