

Avoid becoming a victim

BY STEPHANIE RIEDY
STAFF OPINION WRITER

A tragedy recently occurred on the UNLV campus: the alleged sexual assault of a student by another student. The defendant, 20-year-old Arthur Turner, pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of falsely imprisoning his victim.

There has been the typical public "side-taking" behavior, with some saying "She was asking for it," and defaming the victim's character and conduct. Others, however, are in sympathy with the woman who was degraded, humiliated, and robbed of her most precious possession. Like most, they agree that there is no excuse for sexual assault.

This incident brings us all face-to-face with grim reality. I know that I speak for much of the female student body when I say that upon learning of the reported attack, one of my first

thoughts was, "That could have been me." The sad truth is there is a 33 percent probability that one day it WILL be me, since one out of three women is attacked before she reaches the age of 18.

Statistics like this one are frightening, but they're also much easier to ignore or discredit than the shock of an actual sexual assault involving acquaintances or friends. It is hard for a small community like the one at UNLV to absorb and cope with the emotional trauma inflicted by such a calamity.

That is why I sincerely hope that we can take to heart the saying "Out of all bad there can come some good." This case, though as yet unresolved, should serve as a wake-up call to students and a bond that unites us against similar catastrophes in the future.

Although there are situations when a victim has absolutely no recourse, there are many precautions we can take to be more safe:

- Pepper spray costs approximately \$14 and can be pur-

chased easily at post offices, convenience stores, and even some supermarkets. Keep in mind, though, that mace in a purse or backpack is about as useful as a punctured life preserver. Keep it on hand and ready to use if the need arises!

- Use the buddy system - four fists are a lot more intimidating than two. When walking to your car at night have someone walk with you, or at least watch to see that you make it safely to your vehicle. You can also call **Student Security Services** at 895-1302 for a free escort.

- Most importantly, be alert to your surroundings! Avoid areas where an attacker could be concealed, such as shrubbery or garbage cans. Observe the people around you - are you being followed? If so, remain calm and make a beeline for the nearest public area.

Sadly, a large percentage of rapes are committed by dates, friends, or acquaintances - people that we trust and even care for! There is only one answer: trust only those you know very well and even then,

be cautious.

On first dates, arrange a meeting in a public place like a restaurant. Don't get in a car with someone unless you know them well, and use discerning judgment in choosing whom you visit or invite into your own apartment or dorm room.

These precautions are vital, but we are never 100 percent safe. It is heartening that unlike many, the victim in this case reported a crime. I applaud and admire her for it. It requires a brave individual to face the inevitable slander that results from such a highly public case.

After suffering such trauma, many victims are frightened and unable to cope with the pressures of court testimony and public knowledge of their personal tragedy. The key truth is: each unreported personal tragedy is in fact a public tragedy, because it leaves a ruthless assailant free to commit further criminal acts.

Liberal

from pg. 5

Another fact the liberals seem to miss is that it is very difficult to succeed in America if you cannot speak and write English. A good knowledge of English is almost a necessity, especially in the business world. Only talented athletes and artists can usually be successful in America without speaking English, but those are few and far between.

Is it really realistic to expect someone who does not speak English to be successful in the business world? I guess it doesn't matter to liberals since they rarely care about realism anyway.

This bill is another step in the right direction for America. It allows people to keep their native culture while ensuring that we all have at least one thing in common, our language. The passing of this bill will be the first great victory in the long battle to break down the barriers which divide our society.

Matt Morillo writes for the Long Island University Pioneer.

Banks impeding direct student loans

BY U. S. SEN. PAUL WELLSTONE

The Republican budget bill is a bust for students and a bonanza for special interests.

It provides a government-guaranteed monopoly to the banks and guaranty agencies in the student loan industry worth as much as \$115 billion in new business over the next seven years (source: Congressional Budget Office). At the same time, it prohibits colleges and universities from choosing the best service and lowest cost to their students.

I am proud to stand with colleges and students against this effort to undermine education while protecting the

profits of banks and guaranty agencies. Students from Minnesota and across the nation have fought valiantly against this Republican assault on student aid.

There have been some victories and students should feel empowered! After a key Senate committee voted to tax colleges and universities 0.85 percent on their loan volume, increase the interest rate on parent PLUS loans, eliminate the six-month grace period in which students do not have to pay the interest on the loans, and cut back on the student direct loan program, students made their voices heard in the

halls of Congress.

When this legislation reached the Senate floor, the Senate voted to strike all of these cuts with one exception: the cap on the direct loan program.

Only two years after enactment, the direct loan program has already become hugely popular with colleges and students. The program allows colleges and universities to cut costs. Students and parents prefer the direct loan program because it's faster and easier.

Students work directly with the school's financial aid office instead of shopping around for a lender and waiting for

the bank to process the paperwork and forward it to the school. As a result, loan money is available within days, rather than weeks.

Direct lending offers flexible repayment options, including one based on income. This gives borrowers greater control over their finances and career choices, and decreases the likelihood of defaulting.

In addition to enabling students to pay back their loans based on a percentage of their income, the direct loan program cuts out much of the bureaucratic red tape.

Under direct lending, students can bypass the maze of

lenders and other middlemen that comprise the old student loan system, and borrow directly from the federal government through their campus financial aid office.

We cannot allow special interests to win out over common sense and the best interests of students, schools and taxpayers. We should be doing everything we can to make higher education available and affordable to everyone. Direct loans are an important part of that.

Wellstone is the Democratic representative from Minnesota.

Student dissatisfied with dorm experience

When I moved into the dorms I expected a new experience in academic life. Living on campus would focus my attention on school work and make learning easier. Being on campus would give me greater access to university facilities and instructors.

What I didn't expect were numerous problems and an uncaring staff of administrators apathetic to student needs and concerns.

When fall semester finally arrived I was packed and ready to make the big move into Hughes Hall. My first experience was with administration failure.

I waited in line for an hour to check in, only to find out they had lost my initial payment. I was sent to the main residential life office to clear up the matter.

After I walked through the door I encountered another line of people with problems. I waited patiently. Finally it was my turn. Instead of getting an empathetic ear I was confronted by someone who didn't seem to care.

I explained the situation. I had paid by credit card and

had confirmed my room assignment earlier. The office worker pressed a few keys on her computer console and reported back that they had no record of payment.

She suggested I hadn't paid and should pay now. I thought to myself, 'Hadn't she heard what I had said before?'

After a long discussion I suggested she look in the files to see if an oversight had been made. Sure enough, a mistake was made.

After another half hour of delay I was off to begin the check-in process all over again. I had to wait in line again. I thought 'It's the first day,' so a little understanding was in order. I thought that all the way to my new room, until I opened the door to my new home.

It seems that Hughes Hall was the dorm selected for the summer semester. They had not cleaned the room.

I walked into the bathroom. Mold was growing through the paint. I don't think the people in occupancy before me knew what Ajax was, so I won't discuss the details of the toilet and shower.

The other people living in the dorms were the only bright spot in an otherwise dismal day. We found solidarity in commiserating over the condition of our rooms.

I tried to settle into the routine of constant noise and the fear of my car being broken into when my room was subject to an act of vandalism.

I was taking a nap when I heard a crash—the sound of glass breaking as an apple was thrown through the window. I was the victim of a drive-by fruiting. I'm glad my roommate was not home when the window broke, since glass was strewn all over his bed. As a matter of fact, glass made it into the smallest corners of the suite.

The police came out and maintenance fixed the window, but I never felt safe in the dorms again.

Problems continued throughout the semester. Room and car break-ins were reported constantly. I wasn't the only one victimized by residing on campus.

My hope for a place to further academic success was turning into a nightmare. I decided it was time for action, so I wrote a letter to the head

of residential life outlining my concerns. I wanted out of my year-long contract. When I spoke with veteran residents about my desire to move, they laughed. Numerous stories were related about similar attempts.

Basically, unless you took the trip down the isle or were near death, you were bound to your fate.

One of my friends decided that getting married was his best hope. Over the Thanksgiving break he tied the knot with his girlfriend of only a couple of weeks.

I knew I was not ready for marriage and my last physical showed excellent health. I resigned myself to my fate.

However, three weeks went by without a response. If my letter was not sufficient for release from the contract, I hoped they would at least respond to my concerns.

When a response finally came in, it basically stated they had received my letter and I would have to stay in the dorms. No one bothered to address my concerns or provide a procedure to further my case (they did tell me how to appeal the decision).

Is this the way they handle

everyone's problems? The fees total around \$2,600 for a semester, depending on the meal plan you buy. And this was the service received?

The people running residential life need to be more concerned with the feelings of the residents. Residents need to know they are consumers of a service which residential life provides.

Only one administrator showed any concern. The head of the Upper Classman Complex called me to let me know that there were more people wanting to move in than they had space available for. She helped me out of my contract. I wish more of the staff had been as understanding and willing to help.

Living on campus could and should be a growing experience for students trusting the university to provide safe, adequate housing. I hope the administration will strive to provide excellence in service for the students who pay their salaries. But that will only happen if more students demand better.

Nate Hilmo is an Opinion Writer for The Rebel Yell.