

What Campus Safety Means to Me

By [Elizabeth DeOrnellas](#)

When the [Jillian Murray](#) story went viral, I was shocked.

Not because it happened at my alma mater.

I know large, Southern, filled-with-Greek-life universities have a rape problem.

I was shocked because of how bad the coverup was.

I love [UNC](#).

It was my first choice. I applied early action. I was ecstatic to get in. I went to prospective students weekend and thought I had arrived in Pleasantville. My mother is the one who came up with that label.

We were both awed by the gorgeous campus, the knowledgeable tour guides, the beautiful chancellor's box over the football stadium, the [a cappella groups](#) singing [James Taylor](#) - we knew it was an act. But it worked. It worked because everyone - *everyone*, no matter how high up: tour guide, sophomore student on a panel, admissions counselor, university administrator - everyone talked about student life. They all gave off the impression that every student at Carolina loves their life because they found their niche.

They were right about me. I found mine at [The Daily Tar Heel](#). I went to [Freshman Camp](#) not because I like camp (*I don't - I was a [summer swim team kid](#), not a [summer camp kid](#)*), but because I was out-of-state and knew no one. That worked out too. The girl I met at Freshman Camp who loved everything about it - showed up early, knew all the chants before the rest of the campers even arrived, made fast friends with the counselors, became an RA when she got back to campus - started talking about being one of my bridesmaids way before either of us even had a boyfriend in the picture.

She was with me and my now-husband [the night UNC won the National Championship](#). She had already graduated (a year early); I made her come back from her [ECU](#) masters program for the game. We watched it at [Hillel](#), just a few blocks from Franklin Street. We got prime real estate on the corner of Franklin and Columbia for the bonfires. You can see her and my now-husband in the photo [The News & Observer](#) took of the crowd below [Top of the Hill](#). You can't see me - I was standing on top of a trash can, and I had slipped. My now-husband is texting me in the photo. They were worried.

When I hear the phrase “campus safety” or the phrase “campus sexual assault,” I think back to the self-defense workshop I attended at UNC. I believe it was senior year - I think I talked one of my roommates into attending with me.

That workshop was one night, for an hour or so, and it was taught by the head of campus police (*or the deputy, maybe? He was high up*). It was women-only on purpose.

I remember the following advice:

1. Anyone can break a bone. If you get enough leverage, anyone can do it. Even if all you can accomplish is to grab the pinky of an assailant, you can break that pinky.
2. Making an attacker angry is useless. The goal is to cause physical harm.
3. The next goal is to run away. Fast. Always be in shape enough to run away. Think about your shoes. Kicking them off might be worth the time if it means you then run faster. If you can't kick them off, make sure you know how to run in them.
4. The “carry your keys between your fingers” trick works, but only if you use them to go after your assailant's eyes.
5. Knees are only designed to bend one way. If an attacker pushes you up against a wall, you now have leverage. Use it to break a kneecap. If you push hard enough, fast enough, in the wrong direction, something will snap.
6. You have to commit. See #2. Don't do anything halfway. That includes screaming. If you are going to scream, scream loudly. If you can't handle that (*and you should try*), save your breath for the fight. And the running.
7. The moves you use to tell a maybe-friend, maybe-date to back off at a party are different from the moves you use for an attacker. The goal there isn't to cause permanent physical damage. Just make the guy uncomfortable enough to take the hint. We started with that: Here's what you do if someone tries the “across the shoulder” move and you're not into it.
8. Be careful at parties. PJ is dangerous. You don't know how much alcohol is in there. Just because it tastes like juice doesn't mean it is. Just because it tastes like juice doesn't mean it's just juice and alcohol, either.

He made us promise to report it.

He made us promise to be careful. Don't walk alone at night. Anywhere. Not even on campus. Told us he once found a pair of panties on the quad and didn't know how to react.

He told us men were actually more likely to be the victim of a violent crime because men take more risks, including being more likely to walk home alone, drunk.

He told us most women who are sexually assaulted know their attacker.

Told us to be careful who walked you home. Told us the guy who just handed you a drink at a party isn't your friend. Told us to know who our friends are.

He made us promise not to blame ourselves.

He told us there was a good chance that reporting would make it worse.

Told us he had seen how hard it was for fathers, for brothers ... how he had seen so many men lash out because they didn't know how to react.

It's easier not to believe.

It's easier to believe she asked for it.

That way you don't have to think about how you didn't protect her.

It's a shame game.

And the girl gets screwed twice.

The [Duke lacrosse scandal](#) hit the spring of my freshman year at Carolina. I was in the process of gunning hard to become an assistant editor at the [DTH](#). I had already become friends with my own assistant editors, since I was a freshman staff writer who thought "*you work two days a week*" meant "*you spend all your free time in the newsroom, and you frequently work on a story for three or four days straight because you like the complicated assignments more than the daily fluff pieces.*" I respect those assistant editors so much as journalists and mentors. I remember them making rape a running joke. I remember joining in; [because it was Duke](#), and morbid humor is a journalist's way of turning cynicism into a mission statement by cutting it with something other than booze or black coffee.

I am 100 percent on Jillian's side. I respect how effectively she has turned what many saw as whiny victimhood into empowering [activism](#). My sister is in grad school at [Berkeley](#) now. Everyone jokes about how Berkeley never got over the '60s. In some ways, it hasn't. That's a good thing. I like that the campus flagpoles hoist "[It's On Us](#)" banners.