

"Sheri, you keep telling the same story over and over. You're fixating. You have to let it go."

"I can't let it go. It's right in front of my eyes every second. And I know it wasn't my fault, but I can't help feeling that it was stupid to go anywhere near that party."

"What I hear you saying is that you feel it's your own fault for going to a party that wasn't safe."

"Yeah, I guess it was. They told us at orientation to be careful about that. I guess I should have listened."

"Now we're getting somewhere. You can't change what you are until you take responsibility for your own actions."

"This is bullshit."

"Now Sheri, we don't use that language here."

"The fuck we don't. 'Bullshit' is a lot less dangerous than the language you're using. Telling me that it was my fault, that I wanted it, that I probably enjoyed it. You weren't there. You didn't have some asshole jock sitting on your belly holding your nose while he poured liquor down your throat. You didn't feel him tear your shirt open and grind his thumbs into your tits, rubbing your nipples raw. You didn't have your pants ripped off. You didn't get raped. And raped and raped and raped. How about we all hold you down while I shove this Coke bottle so far up your ass that it has to be surgically removed? Then you can tell me how much you enjoyed it."

"Now Sheri, talk like that doesn't help anyone."

"It helps me."

"No, it doesn't. You're fixating again. To recover ..."

"Recovery, hell. You've never lost anything that you didn't buy, and could replace as soon as you got the insurance check. You don't recover from what Amelia lost, what I lost, what everyone in this room has had taken from them in one way or another. This is bullshit. You're bullshit."

"You tell him, Sheri."

"Yeah, you go, girl!"

"Now everybody let's calm down. We were getting somewhere with Sheri. We were getting to the root of her issues."

"No, we weren't. *You* were. The girl was *raped*. Rape is not an issue. It's a violation. It's not something you own, it's something that owns you. You don't recover from it. You don't even get to the place where you say you're in recovery. You just is. 'Raped' is a part of you the rest of your life. But you wouldn't know about that, you tight-assed little white male fucker..."

"Shut up, Tamika."

"No, you shut up, Mr. G!"

"Nisha, I'm warning you!"

"Don't you go raising your hand to my girl Nisha!" I don't believe I did that. I don't believe I just grabbed Mr. G's wrist. Now what do I do?

"We've got you're back, Sheri. Bobbi, you get his other arm. Somebody get his tie and belt, tie him up to the chair. Get his shoelaces and tie his feet to the chair legs."

"You won't get away with this! I won't let you get away with this! I'm still running this group! You still have work to do!"

"How we gonna shut him up? I wish we had a leather mask with a ball gag. That's what he deserves. But I'd settle for some duck tape."

"I've got *this*."

"What's that, girl?"

"Long thin maxi. With wings."

"That ought to feel real good getting pulled off his beard. If he lives long enough to get to experience it. Now, Mr. G, you just quit struggling and mumbling. Watch and listen. You might just learn something. Okay, Sheri, you were saying?"

“The judge only put me in this rehab program because he didn’t believe me. He thought the sex was consensual, the whiskey was my idea, that the Ecstasy he pushed down my throat when I was passed out from whiskey and pain and shock was voluntary. He didn’t believe a word I said. But the staff at the hospital did, when I came in bleeding and bruised and incoherent. I felt like I was back in my grandfather’s recording of ‘Alice’s Restaurant.’ The judge didn’t even look at the 27 color 8 by 10s with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explaining what each one was to be used as evidence against my rapist. He just called it ‘under-age drinking and you deserved what you got’ and gave me probation and rehab. Thought he was doing me a favor, and only did it because of Joyce from the rape center. Big favor, shit. He didn’t give anything to the attacker. Didn’t want to ruin the football career of the darling little boy. Well, Mr. G., you can tell that judge for me that after what he and you are doing to me I wouldn’t be surprised if I end up needing rehab. I can’t get that night out of my mind. I can’t stop telling myself I was stupid to go anywhere near that party. Joyce, who knows a shit load more about rape counseling than you, tells me I have to tell my story over and over until I can let go of blaming myself and take my power back from that jock bastard. But you sit here telling me – telling all of us – that we’re fixating. When I say I was stupid, so I can get it out and give it away, you force it right back on me with that ‘reflective listening’ shit.”

God, I wish it had gone that way...