



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

POLICE DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

GREGORE SAMBOR
Commissioner

January 24, 1984

Major Leonard T. Koper, Director
Bureau of Research and Development
Pennsylvania State Police
Department Headquarters
1800 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, Pa. 17109

Dear Major Koper:

The Sex Crimes Unit was established in January, 1981 so that a separate unit of the Police Department could investigate rape and other sex offenses. It was created during a period of enlightened awareness, on a national level, concerning the crime of rape.

New legislation was introduced and passed which provided the victim with certain safeguards that were nonexistent only a few years prior. There were also pressure groups on a national and local level, that were questioning police methods, that were encouraging victims to report this crime and, who were bringing it to the attention of the public through the news media.

Within this context, it was decided that all sex offenses reported to the Department would be accepted for investigation by the Sex Crimes Unit. A new Directive was written and published which established the Sex Crimes Unit and contained many of the safeguards provided to the victim under Pennsylvania law. A training program was developed, and all personnel assigned to the unit completed an extensive training course.

During the first two years of the Units' existence, incidents of reported rape cases increased steadily. All reports of rape, regardless of how vague or ill-defined they may be, are investigated by the Sex Crimes Unit, Juvenile Aid Division. These investigations coded according to guidelines established by the Uniform Crimes Reporting program; i.e., - if an investigation shows that no offense occurred nor was attempted, the reported offense can be unfounded for UCR purposes. All such Part I offenses are still recorded and then scored as unfounded.

Prior to the formation of the Sex Crimes Unit, rape investigations were conducted by the seven geographical detective divisions. Personnel of these units carry a fairly large case load.

The Sex Crimes Unit was supplied with ample personnel to be able to devote sufficient time to conduct complete and thorough investigations while maintaining relatively low case loads. This enables them to bring most cases to a successful conclusion or determination.

The following are general examples of types of rape reports that meet the above criteria:

- A. Complainant who suffers from a medically diagnosed mental condition reports a rape. Investigators determine that the account of the crime as reported is wildly improbable; e.g., rape occurred in a well travelled public place in broad daylight with no witnesses to support allegation, or rape perpetrated by extra-terrestrials, evil spirits, television or movie stars, etc. Further investigation reveals that the complainant is under the treatment of a psychiatrist. In some cases, psychiatric personnel from the contracted Code "R" hospital determine that the complainant has a serious mental disorder. It should be noted that disturbed individuals of this sort tend to report rapes repeatedly. Each separate complaint is fully investigated.
- B. Complainant reports rape while in a highly intoxicated or drug induced state. Little coherent information is made available to the investigator during the initial interview of the stuporous complainant. Attempts to interview the complainant when she is sober are met with surprise on the part of the complainant who does not remember reporting the incident or being raped.
- C. Juvenile complainant reports rape as an excuse for lateness, pregnancy, truancy, sexual precocity, lost money, etc. After a detailed interview, the complainant admits to prevaricating about the reported rape.
- D. Complainant reports rape but relates several different and quite distinct accounts of the same incident. Numerous inconsistencies and contradictions are discovered by investigators. No evidence of rape is obtained. When confronted with doubt, complainant changes story again. Witnesses are often found to refute complainant's allegations.
- E. Adult complainant reports rape to cover for infidelity, indiscretion, lateness, pregnancy, etc. Complainant admits to lying after questioning by investigators.
- F. Complainant reports rape in order to obtain medical services free of charge; e.g., pregnancy test, "morning after" birth control pills, test for venereal disease, etc. Admits to scheme during interview.

- G. Rape is reported by someone other than the rape complainant (husband, boyfriend, parent, emergency room personnel, school teacher, etc.). Complainant informs investigators that no rape actually occurred. The complainant, in many cases, is unaware that a report has been made on her behalf.
- H. Complainant reports rape in order to obtain revenge on a male who "did her wrong". The accused is usually an ex-boyfriend or ex-husband. The complainant admits to fabricating the story during interview or at a later date when she realizes the consequences of her accusation.
- I. Complainant reports rape so that police will settle a domestic dispute. Complainant wants police to recover money, property, etc. or insure that a male will stop "bothering" her. Investigation reveals no rape or attempt rape, and there is no evidence to substantiate the charge. No evidence is presented to warrant reclassifying the complaint.
- J. Juvenile complainant, for reasons known only to herself, concocts rape story. Investigation causes child to admit that she made up the rape account. Such complaints usually arise from naivete on part of the child who is sexually precocious. In an effort to impress her peers or family, she creates a non-existent imaginary sexual scenario which eventually reaches the ears of the police and is investigated.
- K. Juvenile complainant reports rape at the urging of a parent or guardian, usually as a result of a custody dispute in divorce cases. Child admits to lying during interview.
- L. Complainant reports rape in order to make husband/boyfriend feel guilty or jealous. Usually reported following a "lover's quarrel". Investigation reveals complainant's motives for making a false report. Complainant admits to lying but claims she was unaware of consequences.

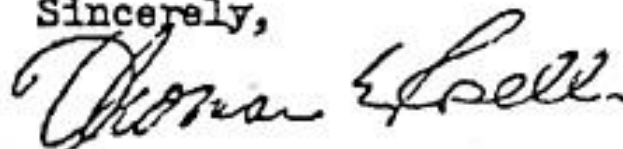
The preceding examples should in no way be interpreted to show that the Sex Crimes Unit, Juvenile Aid Division, capriciously unfounds reported rapes, nor should they indicate that this unit does not accept rape reports initiated by mental patients, chronic alcohol or drug abusers, or prostitutes (many such cases, active and cleared, are on file in the Sex Crimes Unit). Each case is clearly judged on its own merits and coded accordingly.

In our desire to fairly report and investigate all complaints of rape, we have inadvertently created a statistical problem. It is my opinion that the percentage increase in this area, although large, is reflective of the policy of fully investigating all complaints of sexual offenses reported to the Department.

Measures are currently being taken to deal with this situation. Beginning in November, 1983, this unit established a policy of reviewing each unfounded rape cases. A board of supervisors composed of Lieutenant Edward P. Doherty #265, Supervisor, Sex Crimes Unit; Captain Clifford Barcliff #1, Commanding Officer, Sex Crimes Unit; and Inspector Thomas Roselli, Commanding Officer, Juvenile Aid Division, closely examines each unfounded rape report in order to determine if the criteria for unfounding, as explained in the Uniform Crime Reporting handbook, has been met.

FOR THE POLICE COMMISSIONER:

Sincerely,



THOMAS M. ROSELLI
INSPECTOR COMMANDING
JUVENILE AID DIVISION
3701 Frankford Avenue
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TMR:cg

cc: Deputy Commissioner, Services and Investigations