

“Understanding towards Sex Crime Victims”

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It was 10 years ago, August 31st, 2000 when I had the incident. I was living in ***, Tokyo at the time. I arrived at *** station after work, and because I experienced something a little unpleasant earlier, I tried taking a detour in place of the usual bright road on my way home from the station by bicycle. I turned left at a T-junction when I was called to stop by a driver in a car. I was asked if I could “give directions to *** station”.

I motioned “that way” with my head, but the driver said, opening a map in the driver’s seat, “I don’t know where ‘that way’ is. Please show me with this map.” Even though I thought it was bothersome, I got off my bicycle, approached to the driver’s seat and tried looking at the map when a second large man emerged from the back seat; suddenly snatched my bag which was hanging on the handle of my bicycle and then the car took off.

Being an important bag, I reached my hand out to quickly get it back, thinking it was a robbery. At that moment, I don’t know how, but I was brought into the back seat and had my face completely hidden with a towel, and when I noticed it the man got on top of my stomach.

With my ears I heard loud music playing. I thought of trying to move, but my hands and feet were bound and I was unable to move with the man on top of my stomach. Unable to scream, I tried to think of what I should do when I heard the sound of a cutter knife being drawn and was told various things such as “not to make noise” and “I’ll cut you”. I then stopped resisting.

Next, the belt on my pants was cut, and I don’t really remember it well, but my pants were lowered and I was raped.

After thinking about the incident over and over again, I filed a report with the police, and after talking to them I went home. It was three or four in the morning the next day then, but I awoke at 6 AM and went to work. I didn’t know any reason to take the day off, and I didn’t much less even a cold. At any rate I was holding on to an important document that needed to be submitted and so without coming up with a way to take the day off from work, I returned to my normal lifestyle.

On the outside I appeared I was able to go to work. Even being unable to eat, I showed up at my

company properly at the appointed time. Perhaps it didn't particularly appear that there was any problem, but when I watched TV at home the TV screen would turn into a sandstorm at midnight without recognition, or would ride the train home from work back and forth continuously.

When I didn't remember, even when I wasn't sleeping, I wouldn't notice it. When I was molested in the train I would remember the criminal and a vomiting reaction remained in my body. Even if I wasn't molested while riding the train, catching the sight of a slightly lewd magazine ad or sports news paper was enough to make me nauseous and there were a number of times I ended up running for the restroom.

And so in this world, this sort of vulgar thing was enjoyed. I only became a target for the sake of this pleasure. I convinced myself somewhere that I was born into an existence meant to be sacrificed. I never intended to blame myself as being bad, but I can only think that it wasn't something that could be helped because this sort of things are approved in the world; I was unable to find a way to calm myself.

I married afterwards, but then divorced being unable to handle my husband's severe demands for children.

I spent the whole time thinking about why my feelings are not understood, but I became too constrained, and my last call for help was the world of the Internet. In the world of the internet, I had a place to vent. On Internet self-help groups or bulletin boards, symptoms like the memories I mentioned would not be remembered and the flashbacks would occur, but this became normal during conversation.

And so, it was there I started talking to a girl who went through the same incident as I around the same time.

It was only the same rigidity of thinking no one understands, but being able to meet someone who understand me was the ultimate thing that saved me and from that point I felt I was able to quickly recover my life, greatly change my feelings and that I finally became able to precisely take things positively.

I have listened to 2000 women who are victims of sex crimes and sexual violence from then and what they want the most is to find someone who understands them, just like I did.

Among the 2000 female victims I have listened to, there were only about 20 people who made a report to the police. In short, that's just 1%. To that degree there are victimized people who can't talk about it. Maybe there is no prejudice, but perhaps it's that there is no environment nearby where their voice can be heard or where they can speak. I think there are victims who choose to quit much less try talking

again to someone after being misunderstood by one person they thought was reaching out to them.

To have our feelings understood is what sex crime victims like myself want the most.

Even if the criminal isn't caught or punished, meeting such people is salvation for sex crime victims. I think it is the only thing that can save them.

I hope many will understand such feelings and that you will be able to do so for sex crime victims.

“The Definition of an Exhaustive Investigation”

Police Station Worker Sergeant Female

The cell phone rang before dawn.

A robbery has occurred in this jurisdiction. A store clerk chasing the suspect was hit by the suspect's car and is unconscious.

When I went to the police station upon receiving an emergency summons, I was instructed that “there was an autopsy request, go to H Hospital”, and so I headed quickly for the hospital the victim was transported to.

I arrived at the hospital and entered the emergency center. When I confirmed the victim who was laid down in a stretcher, I didn't correctly remember the victim's name yet. As far as I was concerned this body was still a “robbery incident victim”.

That was until I saw the figure of his mother intently rubbing his body, which was covered in still warm wounds, while calling his name repetitively.

Then afterward, when supporting the victim, I listened to his mother talk about the intently lived life he led, and his life became significant in mine.

Then I thought I had to convey this.

I had to make the voices of the victim and his family heard to each and every investigation and the court. Without knowing his life, I couldn't convey the “regret that so many possibilities lying up ahead had been shut”. Without hearing the voices of the people who loved him, I could not deliver the feelings of loss. By conveying this first, I thought it would be possible to question the guilt of the perpetrator who closed this life.

At times a person is given a title. Not just our work titles like “police officer”, but in regions there titles like “So-and-so's Mom”, or “So-and-so's son”.

Such titles might conceal true parts of a person.

I think the same happens with the title “victim”.

Even when investigators grasp the details of the incident, many only recognize them the “victims” who were afflicted in the incident.

What kind of life did this person live? What kind of personality did this person have? What dreams did this person have? Can an exhaustive investigation be given for a victim who can't be understood, or whose name can't be called with true meaning? I felt that if I were not the police officer, but were rather in the position of the mother who lost her child, I might think that. From the anger that leads nowhere, I might close my heart even to the investigators.

"You're doing this because it's your job."

"Are you really working because you're thinking about the victim who died?"

My heart quaked, when imagining the sadness that might make me feel like that even if I understood how investigators worked without sleep for the investigations.

I could not but groan when I was instructed to listen and make a written statement of the feelings of the victim's parents. How can I put the sadness that stirs the heart into words? Is it possible to deliver to other people? Can I even get the parents to talk about their true feelings? The conclusion I came to was to deliver them my honest feelings.

I couldn't dare pretend that I understood. I didn't understand, but I wanted to. I wanted to deliver their sadness to those who are involved in the investigation, and make the investigation alive. I wanted to deliver their voices to the court. So I told these feelings I had to the mother, without exaggerating anything. She listened to me silently, and when I finished, nodded slowly and quietly began her story: He weighed exactly 3000 grams when he was born".

Afterwards, showing one picture after another, she told me in details of how moved and happy she was when he was born, how he grew and how he had his rebellious phase too, and what he could have done in his life. In all the pictures she showed me, he smiled happily. In my heart, his smile and his mother's words echoed deeply.

"All I wanted to see was him getting married, hold their babies, and see my son becoming a parent with his growing children. I don't hope for any great happiness. I don't want luxury. Even though my life may be concerned hum drum, seeing my children and grandchildren live happily, and ending my life peacefully is what I wanted. Now that dream cannot be wished. I want the murderer to feel the pain of having to send their children before yourself which is not possible to put into words. I am telling my feelings and story so that the inspectors who are involved can understand the honest life that my son lived. Even though it may cause trouble to the inspectors, I want you to make the truth clear with all you can. I fully understand that the judge will be fair in their judgment. Even if it is for a second, I want them to replace their feelings with ours. If they have children, I want them to imagine them as my son. If they don't have children, then I want them to imagine their parents as me. If it is a judgment after feeling the pain, then I am ready to take in any reality. I want you to tell them this." After reading out loud the document created to her, she listened quietly, sometimes showing smiles and sometimes having tears in her eyes. After finishing reading her the document she bowed deeply. Even though we

may not fully understand their feelings, I believe that we can at least feel their pain partially. An inspector who lives to help the Crime Victims, is truly what leads to Crime Victim Support.